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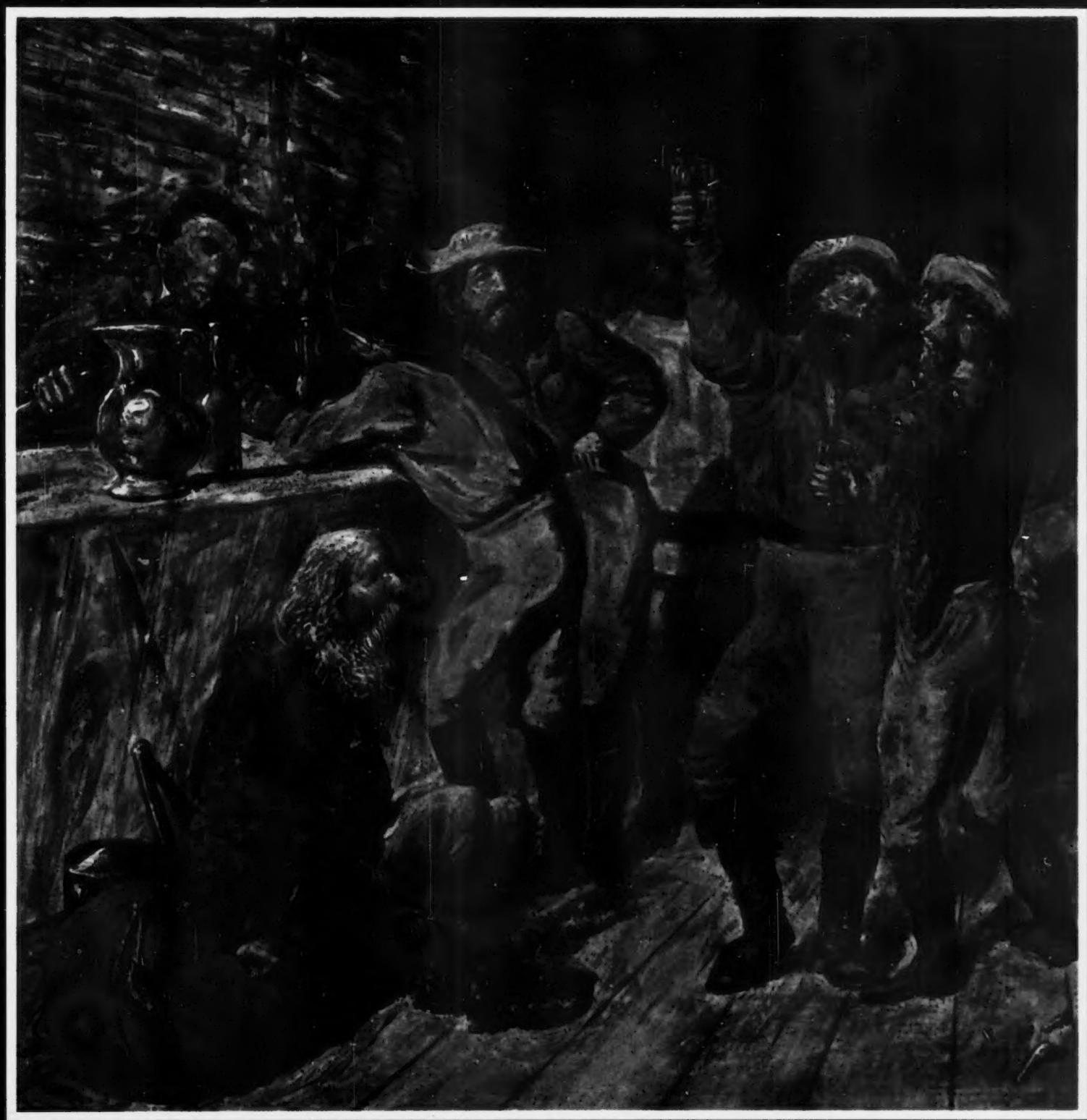

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COVER: A typically rambunctious scene in a mining camp saloon in California's Mother Lode country, painted by William G. R. Hind about 1863. Liquor was the great compensator in western mining camps, where a man's dreams had a way of shriveling. As one observer noted: "Bright visions of big lumps of gold and large quantities of them, to be gathered without any severe labor, haunt them night and day. . . . They come here with this hope, and it takes but a few short weeks to dispel it. Temptations are about them on every hand. They drink and they gamble. They associate with men who, in their eastern homes, would be shunned by them as the worst of their kind; they sink lower and lower." For more on the quality of life on the mining frontier, see the article by T. H. Watkins beginning on page 34.

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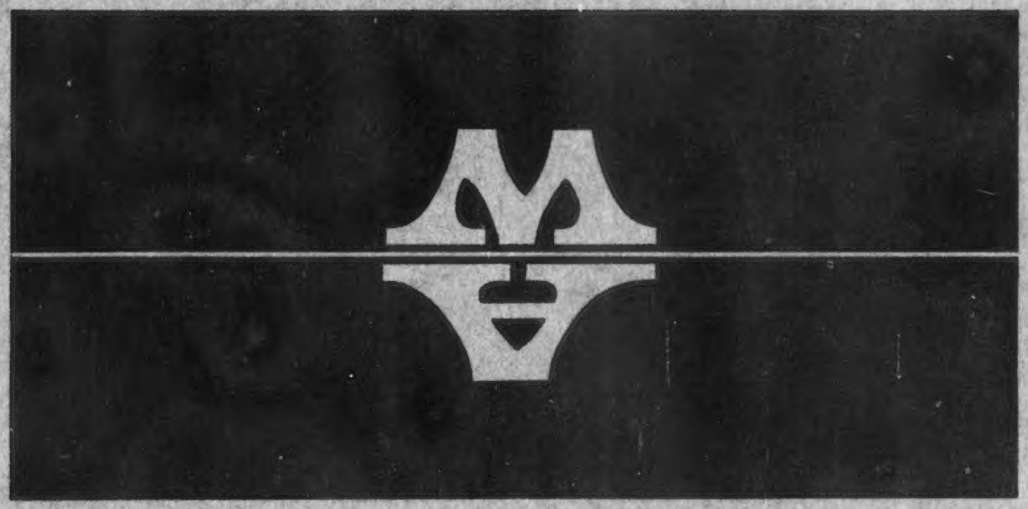

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The organist of the Central City, Colorado, Methodist church at the turn of the century.

THE
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THE MAGAZINE OF WESTERN HISTORY

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HENRY A. CRABB

BY *Joe A. Stout*

ON APRIL 8, 1857, at the edge of the village of Caborca, hogs were feeding on the bodies of dead Americans, while several hundred Mexicans gleefully shouted, "*Muerto a los gringos* (Death to Americans)." At the town plaza the head of the American leader was floating in a jar of mescal, displayed for all to see. The air was heavy with the smell of death, yet the Mexicans were preparing for a gala celebration.

Only a few short months before, the head on display had sat on the shoulders of Henry Alexander Crabb, a California state senator who appeared destined for a brilliant future. Many of his followers were prominent Californians—men unlikely to sacrifice their lives foolishly on a quixotic venture. The entire group of fewer than one hundred men had followed a dry, dusty, and dangerous trail to Sonora early in 1857, proclaiming their intention of colonizing part of northern Sonora, only to meet a degrading death at Caborca on April 7.

Crabb had firmly believed he was entering Sonora at the invitation of leading citizens—including Ignacio Pesqueira, the potential governor. Upon arrival in Sonora, however, Crabb and his men treacherously were ordered captured and shot by Pesqueira—dead men could tell no stories of betrayal. The only survivor of the massacre was a sixteen-year-old boy, who was spared for reasons of youth. To Mexicans it was made to appear that Crabb and his men were filibusters —*gringos* from the north who took part in fomenting insurrection and rebellion. Never resolved—then or yet—was the question of Crabb's real intentions: were he and his men in Sonora to wrest territory from a weak and neighboring republic, or were they innocent colonizers, dupes of a master plan that would give Pesqueira control of Sonora? Whatever the truth, Crabb's entanglement did prove how volatile and unpredictable Mexican politics and politicians could be.

The Mexican frontier in 1857 was a wild, lawless, and dangerous place. Apache Indians raided within fifteen miles of Guaymas, the principal seacoast village. Indians harassed caravans, killed homesteaders, and mercilessly preyed on all villages in the area. In addition, outlawry had become so serious a problem that in 1856 martial law was declared in many areas of the frontier. Thus plagued by Indian and outlaw raids, Sonora also suffered the ravages of revolution, as did Mexico at large.

After the end of the war with the United States, Mexico had displayed little governmental stability. Liberals struggled to defeat conservatives. In Sonora conservative forces led by

Henry Alexander Crabb, promising California state senator.

Manuel María Gandara, the governor, fought liberal leaders such as Ignacio Pesqueira. In the midst of this struggle, rumors spread that one of these groups was seeking support from Americans in California. To some opportunistic Americans a divided Sonora seemed to be a singularly attractive chance to improve their lot. Reminiscent of the gold rush, Californians thought the mineral wealth of Mexico could be promising, only awaiting American exploitation. So into this land, replete with hostile men and animals, and enticing rumors of gold and silver strikes, came Henry A. Crabb and his small band of men, the dupes of a Mexican politico in Sonora, would-be governor Ignacio Pesqueira.

PERHAPS IN APPEARANCE and background Crabb was unsuited to the hard life of a filibuster. He was bearded and dark-eyed, resembling in every way the stereotyped aristocratic southerner. A Tennessean by birth and a lawyer by trade, he came to San Francisco in 1849 and became involved in politics. He served in the California Senate during the years 1853–54, edited the Stockton (California) *Argus*, and in 1855–56 ran unsuccessfully for the United States

–Filibuster or Colonizer?

THE STORY OF AN ILL-STARRED GRINGO *ENTRADA*

Senate. He realized early in 1856 that he would not win the senate seat, so he withdrew his name. He was then in his thirties, a pro-slavery supporter, but also a man "of influence, of respectable character and talents." His marriage into the prominent California-Sonora Ainsa family allowed him access to the leading political faction in Sonora, led by Ignacio Pesqueira. Allegedly, with Pesqueira's encouragement, Crabb agreed to lead a group of "colonizers" to Sonora.

In 1856 Pesqueira's exhausted forces were unable to control the increasing Indian raids while suppressing the opposition Gandarist faction. With the promise of mining concessions and land grants, Crabb became interested in "settling" the frontier. As early as January, 1856, Crabb went to Sonora by ship. While he was there, influential merchants and other Pesqueira supporters urged him to lead a larger party overland to help place Pesqueira in power. By summer Crabb was making preparations to lead this overland party. When news of this preparation reached Mexico, the Gandarists used Crabb's venture to charge Pesqueira with betrayal of his country. Regardless of the charges and countercharges, Pesqueira gained control, and in July he assumed the executive power of the state of Sonora. The new governor, an intelligent opportunist then only twenty-seven years old, would rule until 1875.

The Arizona Colonization Company—Crabb's group—consisted partly of influential citizens of California, former state senators, and men of substantial backgrounds. Eventually, the force was projected to total one thousand men, however, less than one hundred men actually made the trip. They sailed from San Francisco in January 1857 and grouped near Los Angeles, where they assembled supplies. From there they journeyed to Yuma Crossing, where they remained for a short time before making the strenuous trip to Mexico.

Word of Crabb's approaching expedition spread rapidly in Sonora. He had made no attempt at secrecy, discussing the expedition freely with California newspapers. The New York *Times* reported April 15 that Crabb's colonizing party was, in truth, a filibustering expedition. In Mexico John Forsyth wrote to Lewis Cass that the newspapers in the Mexican capital had been carrying rumors of the American filibustering expedition for two months. Forsyth expressed the fear that an invasion would result in Mexicans showing little mercy to the Americans.

The group, now numbering about ninety men, left Yuma and followed the Gila River for about forty-five miles. At a place later called Filibuster Camp, they rested to gather strength for the arduous journey that lay ahead. Only after great suffering did the men arrive at Sonoita on the international border. It was then, on March 26, that Crabb wrote a letter to Don José María Redondo, Prefect of Altar. He advised Redondo that the Americans were entering Mexico in accordance with the colonization laws and "in compliance with positive invitations from some of the most influential citizens of Sonora." The party was armed, but Crabb wrote that this was necessary for protection from the outlaws and Indians. He also advised Redondo to make a decision about the Americans: "Bear this in mind, if blood is to flow, with all its horrors, on your head be it, and not on mine." Crabb evidently had been warned of hostile Mexican feelings before the end of his march, but he chose to pursue his venture.

Crabb received an answer, indirectly, in the form of a proclamation by Pesqueira. The governor called on free Sonorans to arm themselves and prepare for a bloody battle. He charged the Americans with violation of the national sovereignty of Mexico. Patriotism was his password for promoting unity in the hearts of all Mexicans. He called for Sonorans to let their "conciliation become sincere in order to fight this horde of pirates, without country, religion, or honor." Conflicting reports circulated in both nations, and Crabb was expected to attack by land and sea. Americans were told that Mexican authorities might have poisoned the water wells from Sonoita to Caborca. In fact, Crabb's plan called for a march through the arid desert region of Sonora to Caborca, Mexico—a march of over ninety miles. Sixty-nine men set out for Caborca, leaving twenty men to follow later. However, only sixteen of these men would follow Crabb into Mexico; four were too ill to make the journey.

WHILE THE AMERICANS marched into Mexico, Pesqueira prepared his defenses. Don Lorenzo Rodriquez and two hundred men were sent from Altar to Caborca. Mexican citizens were indignant over this American invasion, but they were especially vehement in their condemnation of those who may have invited Crabb to enter Mexico. This attitude perhaps led to the death sentence later inflicted on the group of filibusters. General Luis Noriega, commander at the Guaymas garrison, called the Americans pirates; he implored his men to "march to meet them. Let there be no mercy shown, no generous sentiment felt for these rascals." In addition, the Mexicans launched a maritime expedition on March 17 from Mazatlán. Led by José Velásquez Cadena,

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this convoy hoped to attack any American invasion by sea.

The Mexican village of Caborca learned of Crabb's approach by land, and on April 1 the first hostile contact was made. The Americans were unprepared for an attack, as they had no scouts in advance. As the Crabb group marched through a wheat field in disorderly formation, the Mexicans attacked. Although caught unaware, Crabb's men killed several Mexicans, including one of the leaders. After the initial contact, both sides withdrew. The Mexican force returned to Caborca, and later the Americans followed. To enter the village they had to cross a barren strip of land about four hundred yards from the village. This clearing exposed them to intense Mexican rifle fire from fences, houses, and shelters. Still, the Americans attacked and forced the Mexicans to withdraw to a church in the city. The church walls were thick, and the Mexicans very tenaciously held their position.

Five Americans had been killed and fifteen more wounded

Seated at the right is Antonio Garcia, who was present at the 1857 fight between Crabb and the Sonorans.

The church at Caborca, where the Mexican force stayed for six days before finally defeating Crabb and his party.

ALL PHOTOS· COURTESY OF ARIZONA PIONEERS' HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

in the house-to-house fight, but a considerably larger number of Mexicans had been killed. Although the Mexicans had the advantage of position, American fire was deadly accurate. To dislodge the church defenders, Crabb ordered his men to blast the church door down. Fifteen men tried to carry a keg of powder to the door, but intense Mexican fire forced them to take cover. Five men lost their lives, and Crabb and seven more were wounded in this effort. Both the Mexicans and the Americans held their positions for almost six days. The building in which the Americans were stationed was well provisioned with large stores of food and water. During this six-day siege more Mexican troops came from nearby towns and surrounded the village, swelling their number to fifteen hundred. Moreover, several hundred Papago Indians armed with bows and arrows were with the Mexicans.

On April 6 one of the Indians shot a fire-tipped arrow into the thatched roof of Crabb's stronghold. Crabb attempted to blow the roof off with dynamite, but in the conflagration several men were burned, and others were killed when the magazine exploded. Reluctantly, the Americans asked the Mexicans for terms of surrender. In reply the Mexicans promised to treat the Americans as prisoners of war. Crabb knew that his men must surrender or fight their way out against a superior force. Many of his men distrusted the Mexicans and wanted to die fighting, but their distrust was overcome by Hilario Gabilondo, who promised medical care for the wounded and fair treatment for the survivors. Crabb sent one man out under a white flag, but Gabilondo took him as a prisoner. The Mexican commander then had him call to his companions that they would be taken as prisoners to Altar if they would march out of the building in single file. At this entreaty the Americans complied.

The Mexican promises quickly proved worthless. The Americans immediately were bound and taken to a nearby

Guaymas, Sonora, the principal seacoast town.

The battles took place in terrain such as this, five miles west of Caborca.

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corral, where they were held until morning. At dawn they were taken out in groups of five or ten and shot in the back —because, some said, the Mexican troops could not look them in the face. Some reports stated that the "bodies were

Don Ignacio Pesqueira, potential governor of Sonora.

left where they fell, and Mexicans were heard to boast that their hogs were fattening upon the bodies of 'Los Yankees.' " Crabb alone faced solitary death. In the *alcalde's* office he talked with another prisoner. He also wrote a letter to his wife. Then he was led out, his hands tied over his head, and his back turned to the executioners. An informant told the San Diego *Herald* that "at the command 'fire,' at least a hundred [rifle] balls were fixed into his body, and all that was mortal of Henry A. Crabb hung dead, swinging by his tied hands." A Mexican severed Crabb's head and placed it in a jar of mescal so that it could be displayed in the village. The Mexicans decided to spare only Charles Edward Evans, a boy of sixteen.

On May 18 the New York *Times* reported the death of Crabb and his party. Other associates of the Crabb group suffered various fates. Agustín Ainsa and Rasey Biven were jailed in Sonora, charged with aiding Crabb. Both men were related to Crabb by marriage, and their subsequent stories of the event, while largely accurate, made the Mexicans unquestionable villains. Still other members of the Crabb party died at the hands of Mexicans. After the execution of Crabb's immediate force, the Mexicans carefully searched the countryside for additional Americans. Parties traveled as far as Sonoita on the international border. There the four sick men left behind at Edward E. Dunbar's general store on the American side of the border were taken by the Mexican force. Twenty-five Mexicans entered Dunbar's store, dragged the four men out, tied them to stakes, and shot them. Dunbar was out of town and probably escaped the same fate. Although the bodies of the Americans were left to rot, a group of Papago Indians buried them. In addition, the Mexicans arrested Jesús Ainsa, Crabb's brother-in-law, and took him to Sonora. When news spread of this border violation, Americans clamored for punishment of the guilty Mexicans.

The Mexican force swiftly dealt vengeance upon unsuspecting reinforcements marching to join Crabb's ill-fated group. Major R. N. Wood and Captain Granville H. Oury organized twenty-five to thirty men in what was called the Tucson Valley Company. This party marched toward Caborca, intending to link forces with Crabb. On or about April 5, when they were fifteen miles from Caborca, they met a combined Mexican and Indian force numbering almost five hundred men, and were ambushed. The Mexican leader, Captain José Moreno of Altar, told the Americans that if they yielded their arms, they would be allowed to leave the state unmolested. However, Captain Oury refused to comply, as he still hoped to join Crabb in Caborca. The Mexican resistance was so strong that Oury's men were fortunate to retreat to the United States border, losing four men on the way. One of the four lost was Major R. N. Wood. The pursuers reportedly lost forty men. Oury displayed high qualities of leadership in the retreat, and some Americans involved stated that had Oury been with Crabb the execution of that larger party would never have taken place. Deadly aim, coolness under fire, and general bravery, along with good leadership, spared the Tucson Valley Company from Crabb's unfortunate fate.

Sixteen other Americans, led by Captain Freeman S. McKinney, also attempting to join the Crabb party, were not so fortunate. A few days after Crabb's execution, a large Mexican force patrolling near Altar discovered this group and attacked it. In contrast to Oury's decision, the McKinney party surrendered—and all were quickly shot, though the Mexicans probably did not definitely know that this group was a part of Crabb's party. On the sea the Mexicans also awaited an attack that never materialized.

Crabb's misadventure precipitated vengeance on all his

countrymen and intensified the violent antipathies that had roots in the Mexican War. *Norteamericanos* on any business were unwelcome in Sonora. Americans, in turn, were appalled and angered at the treatment given Crabb's party, but more especially they were alarmed that Mexicans had apprehended and shot American citizens on United States' soil. John Forsyth wrote an official protest to the Mexican government about the Crabb incident, charging the Mexican government with refusing information or cooperation. Even if Crabb was a filibuster, the United States maintained, he should not have been executed without trial. Forsyth added that "the pirate who roams the ocean with the black emblem of death at his masthead, who robs and murders the people of all nations indiscriminately . . . when overcome by a cruizer of a civilized state, is not put to death on the spot."

Captain Granville H. Oury, whose company was ambushed and retreated to the border.

Later, Rasey Biven, Crabb's brother-in-law, informed the daily *Alta California* that Crabb's party was not a filibustering expedition, but a peaceful colonizing company. He insisted that Crabb came to Sonora at the invitation of Don Ignacio Pesqueira, unaware that Pesqueira deemed it was "politic to denounce them as filibusters, and declare war against them until not one of their invited guests are left to tell what they saw in Sonora." Biven also wrote Forsyth, reiterating his willingness to swear that Pesqueira was the guilty party. When Biven's statement was printed, Californians were easily convinced that Crabb was the unfortunate victim of Mexican politics.

To add credence to Biven's version, the New York *Times*, on May 21, 1857, printed a letter from Francis D. Clark, a former friend of Crabb in Stockton, California. Clark said he talked many times with Crabb. They both knew of the William Walker filibuster into Baja California in 1853, as well as other attempts to take territory. He knew their type of operation, and he said that at no time did Crabb mention hostile intentions in Sonora. He recalled that Crabb was a prominent citizen, an influential leader in the Know-Nothing movement in California, and not inclined to foolish activities.

Later evidence suggests that Clark was correct. According to C. P. Stone, Acting United States Consul at Guaymas in 1859, Pesqueira was eminently capable of chicanery. Stone reported to Lewis Cass in December 1858 that Pesqueira roused his constituents against Americans by calling upon Mexicans to repel a large group of filibusters who allegedly were invading Sonora. According to Stone, this was actually a ruse to obtain men and guns for Pesqueira's forces in Sinaloa, not against "*los gringos*." After assembling alarmed citizens, he sent some to reinforce Pesqueira's army, while the remainder were sent home after registering their firearms. Soon afterward, Pesqueira forcibly collected these firearms and ammunition. Thus if Stone's report were accurate, Crabb may well have been "invited" to come to Sonora in 1857 only to serve the purpose of furthering Pesqueira's hold on that area.

In the course of Sonoran politics, it mattered little who was the guilty party in the Crabb incident. During the next several months, Pesqueira and Gandara charged each other with inviting Americans to settle in Sonora. The United States government considered it a potentially dangerous diplomatic incident, and the House of Representatives printed many of the documents surrounding the event. However, as the facts presented to the United States government offered no defense of the Crabb affair, the United States overlooked the issue for fear of causing serious diplomatic consequences. Men thereafter were cautious about provoking Mexican wrath. Crabb unfortunately was naïve, he entered Mexico at an inopportune time, and he paid with his life. Nevertheless, men continued to dream of that fortune just beyond the horizon, that irresistible urge to "see the elephant."

Joe A. Stout, Jr., *is currently completing his doctorate in history at Oklahoma State University, in addition to finishing a book-length work on filibustering in Sonora and Baja California.*

The Duryeas pose at Lake Eleanor, in Yosemite Valley.

Honeymoon IN HETCH HETCHY

A 1914 glimpse of a Yosemite valley—focal point of America's first major conservation crusade

By LAURA FOSTER

FEW WHO GAZE UPON the placid water of California's Hetch Hetchy reservoir realize what it represents. The man-made reservoir, hotly disputed prior to its construction more than fifty years ago, today fills a valley in Yosemite National Park and provides most of San Francisco's water supply. Symbolic as a liquid graveyard, it represents the absolute defeat of one of the first conservation crusades in the history of the nation.

Hetch Hetchy Valley, named by the Miwok Indians for a plant growing there, was chosen in 1900 as a dam site for the harnessing of the Tuolumne River in the Sierra Nevada. The crusade subsequently mounted by conservationists to prevent the dam is what supposedly killed John Muir, the father of conservation. (He is said to have died of a broken heart after losing the thirteen-year battle to save the valley.)

Located twenty miles northwest of Yosemite Valley, Hetch Hetchy was once termed Yosemite's "sister valley" because of their striking resemblance. It had much of Yosemite's beauty on a smaller scale—the majestic oaks, the verdant meadows, the tree-framed waterfalls, and one of the finest streams in the Sierra. Had it not been converted to a reservoir, Hetch Hetchy would have equaled Yosemite today as a haven for campers, hikers, and nature-lovers.

The question is academic, now, as to whether or not the reservoir should have been built. With two hundred feet of water covering the valley floor, the decision is irreversible. But it is worthwhile to consider the question in light of some valuable first-hand information relayed by two individuals whose lives span the seven decades since the reservoir was first conceived.

They are retired engineer Robert Duryea, eighty-three, and his wife Dorothy, eighty-two. The Duryeas became directly involved in the reservoir question as newlyweds in 1914 when they spent their two-week honeymoon on a mulepacking expedition to the floor of Hetch Hetchy Valley. Formerly, they had been indirectly involved through their respective fathers' professional and personal connections. Their story, including before-and-after impressions of the valley and an account of camping conditions there, may be the most telling evidence historians will ever have on the question of Hetch Hetchy reservoir.

The Duryeas—veteran wilderness campers—are well-qualified to have their experiences told in relation to a conservation crusade. Robert is an enthusiastic backpacker, and Dorothy, who learned to snow-ski at age sixty-five, is a willing companion. They have vacationed in the Sierra every summer for thirty-five years at their remote glacial retreat, Silver Lake. There, they camp in the open for weeks at a time and rarely meet another human being. By their account, they appreciate enormously the "quiet beauty and peace of the mountains."

To understand their experiences in the proper context, a brief historical preface is required. In 1900, because of the expanded water needs of San Francisco's burgeoning citizenry, a new city charter authorized the construction of a large,

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT AND DOROTHY DURYEA

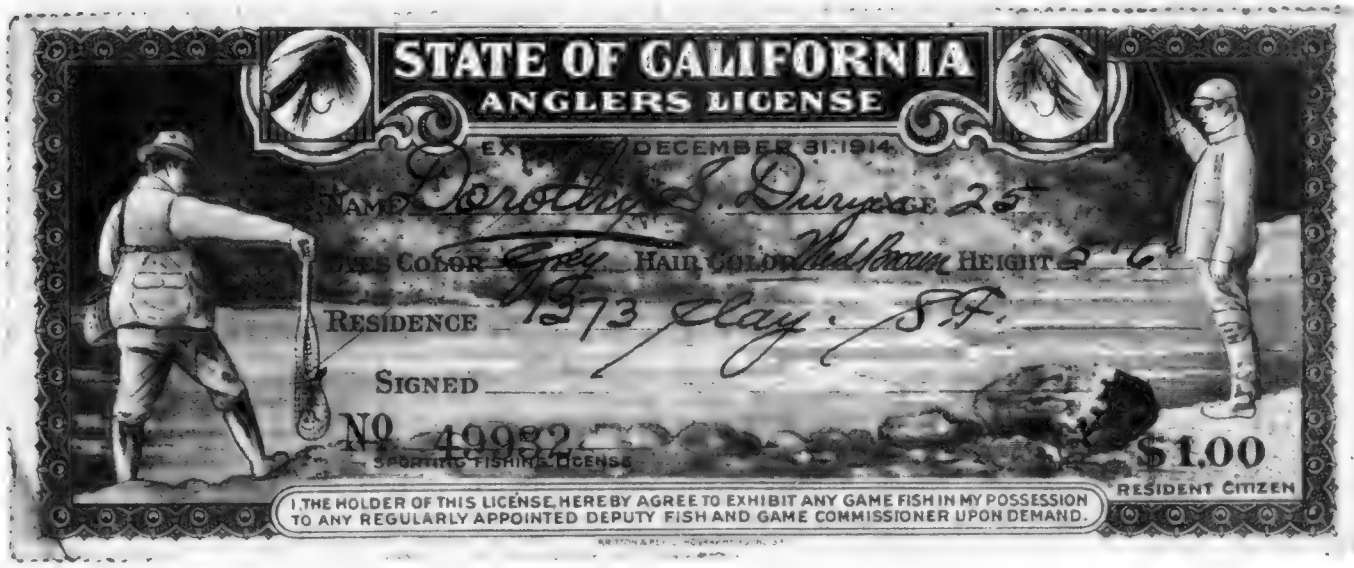
The couple traveled to Hetch Hetchy Valley with pack train, sans guide.

municipally-owned water system. The city had depended previously on smaller, privately-owned water sources.

The city engineer that year reported that Hetch Hetchy was the ideal site for a dam to harness the only available large water source, the Tuolumne River. Claiming it was superior to all possible alternatives, he unleashed a heated political battle that raged until 1913 when the United States Congress finally approved the act to build the reservoir.

As in most battles, there were two sides. On one side were the "preservationist conservationists," led by Muir, who fought to preserve the valley as nature had created it. Muir's philosophy was that filling the splendid canyon with water would be as great a sacrilege as filling the exquisite artistic monument, the Sistine Chapel.

On the other side of the issue were the "utilitarian conservationists," led by San Francisco Mayor James D. Phelan, who wanted to exploit a section of the Yosemite terrain for social benefit. The utilitarians felt that, while nature's precious


STATE OF CALIFORNIA
ANGLERS LICENSE
EX DECEMBER 31, 1914.
NAME Dorothy L. Duryea AGE 25
EYES COLOR Grey HAIR COLOR Med Brown HEIGHT 5' 6"
RESIDENCE 1273 Clay St. SF.
SIGNED
NO 40982
SPORTSMANS FISHING LICENSE
$1.00
RESIDENT CITIZEN
I THE HOLDER OF THIS LICENSE, HEREBY AGREE TO EXHIBIT ANY GAME FISH IN MY POSSESSION TO ANY REGULARLY APPOINTED DEPUTY FISH AND GAME COMMISSIONER UPON DEMAND.

When the Duryeas camped, fish provided the staple food.

wealth deserved protecting, it could at the same time be exploited sensibly to insure a stable water supply for the city by the Golden Gate.

They argued that, aesthetically, a lake would be just as beautiful as a valley, and socially it would be more beneficial. And they had, incidentally, the influential support of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot in Washington.

The utilitarians chided Muir and the "sentimentalists" for advocating a view that had no basis in reason. Their ideas were expressed in an editorial that appeared in the San Francisco *Chronicle* in 1909: "Any pretense that Hetch Hetchy must be preserved untouched for posterity is nonsense. We do not know what posterity will want. Posterity will probably not contain so many fools. So far as we can judge of the requirements of posterity, they will be that every fluid ounce of water which comes down from the Sierra and every kilowatt of power which can be generated by it will be required to maintain a teeming population in reasonable comfort, and the long-haired sentimentalists may go hang." The feelings of the utilitarians eventually won out in what has been described as the unfortunate "conflict of two public interests."

The utilitarians were victorious largely because they were more numerous and enjoyed a greater share of public support. What they achieved was not carried out completely until 1934, however, when a total of three reservoirs (including Hetch Hetchy, completed in 1919) and 155 miles of aqueduct became part of the San Francisco municipal water system.

Swarms of mosquitoes necessitated drinking the mountain water through a hood of netting.

Dorothy's knickers were quite progressive for the styles of the time.

EARLY IN THE 1900s, the fathers of Robert and Dorothy Duryea had been drawn into the controversy as concerned observers. Interestingly, from the standpoint of their children's harmony in later years, they were drawn to opposite sides of the controversy: Dorothy's father opposed the reservoir because of his personal friendship with Muir, and Robert's father favored it by virtue of his occupation.

Dorothy's father, John M. Stillman, was a Stanford chemistry professor who shared a love of hiking with John Muir. At one time, Muir wrote him a letter comparing notes on a particular cross-country trek each had taken in the mountains. Muir described the extremely strenuous journey in terms that made it sound like a leisurely stroll. He wrote of the "perfectly wild" valley he had passed through as "the most perfectly beautiful of all the Yosemites" he had seen. Dorothy's father, sympathetic reader of these and similar remarks, did not enjoy the thought of putting a reservoir in a valley like Hetch Hetchy.

Edwin Duryea, Jr., Robert's father, was chief engineer of the Bay Cities Water Company, which had been commissioned to develop the San Francisco water project. Formerly an eminent New York hydraulic engineer, he served as a consultant on the actual construction of the dam at the disputed valley.

With this kind of personal exposure to the reservoir question, and with other considerations, it is not surprising that the newlyweds chose the honeymoon they did. One of the other considerations was that Robert was interested in seeing the set-up of the valley from a professional standpoint. The engineers who were his colleagues at the Standard Oil Company had been discussing the valley for months, and were curious to know whether an appropriate site had been chosen for the dam.

Robert decided that the only way to satisfy his and their curiosity was to go and check the site in person. He had no qualms that his blushing bride would balk at the idea of such an exhausting honeymoon—Dorothy had been a seasoned camper since she was a young girl.

Actually, the trip was known to be so arduous that few men would have considered it. In a 1909 editorial, the San

Francisco *Chronicle* stated: "[The valley] is virtually inaccessible now, except to the particularly robust and adventuresome, and the number of those who have seen it or who will see it during the present generation is negligible." One historian wrote that it was so inaccessible that only John Muir and a few members of the Sierra Club had ever seen it.

According to Yosemite Park records, only a few hundred people managed to reach Hetch Hetchy in 1914 as compared to several thousand today. There were no roads in 1914 and few trails over which to ride a horse. It was a steep descent from the surrounding high country—from seven thousand to five thousand feet. And once into the valley, the dusty traveler found no hotels—only camping spots along the river.

In view of the difficulty of the trip, it is understandable that the Duryeas commissioned a guide to lead them on horses over their intended route, the Tiltill Trail. The route was circular, starting at a southern point, El Portal, and winding northeast until it reached the valley. From there, they planned to travel south to Yosemite Valley.

As it turned out, the plans changed mid-trip with respect to both the guide and the intended route. As soon as the guide received word that his expectant wife was in labor, he left the Duryeas and dashed back to be with her. When the remaining party of two had pushed as far north as the snow would allow, they turned back and retraced their footsteps.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE to camp on their own in the Sierra? Camping has never been effortless, and for the Duryeas in 1914 it was especially difficult. Overall, they said they enjoyed themselves more than they suffered: but the primitive conditions they endured may explain why so few people attempted an adventure such as this.

When they went—in June—it was early in the season and the weather at night was still extremely cold. They slept in the open without a tent, in rolled-up blankets secured with extra-long safety pins. They spread a tarp under their blankets to provide some protection from the frozen ground; evidently it was effective: they awoke one morning to find a four-foot rattlesnake curled up cozily at their feet!

Since processed and dehydrated food now available to campers did not exist, the couple had to depend largely on natural foods. Their main staple was trout, augmented with fruit and berries, and pancakes, syrup, bacon, and rice that the mule carried.

Breakfast in bed in Hetch Hetchy Valley.

Robert fishes for trout; at right, the park ranger, on a pulley-operated platform, measures the water depth of the Tuolumne River.

XUM

The floor of Hetch Hetchy Valley as it looked prior to the damming for the reservoir.

Carrying the food was all the mule was good for, according to Dorothy; it was always charging ahead of them and disappearing. Robert echoed Dorothy's feelings about the mule and about pack animals in general. He prefers to backpack, so that he is free to go where he wants and doesn't have to worry about feeding and hobbling animals.

One of the hardships of the trip was enduring man-eating mosquitoes on Hetch Hetchy's valley floor. Because of the dampness caused by the trickling river, the valley was a fertile breeding ground for the pesky insects. Said Dorothy: "It was awful with the mosquitoes—we couldn't get out of our nets! There were swarms, and we slept with them and inhaled them with our food. In order to eat, we had to pass a plate of food inside the net, and invariably fifteen mosquitoes would get in too. It was unbearable. Wearing those nets was like walking around in a living cloud."

Fashion is notably absent on most camping trips, and the Duryea trip was no exception. The couple wore simple, functional clothes and sensible hiking boots. Dorothy's pants outfit was shockingly progressive, as she found out later when they reached a populated campsite in Yosemite Valley. Robert recalled: "In those days the women wore high leather boots and short skirts—the view when they bent over was really something! But my wife wore pants [knickers], and when we got to Yosemite, she was looked on with horror by the few women there. How ironic that they thought she was indecent when their own skirts were more revealing."

A park ranger was the only person the Duryeas encountered in their two weeks on the Tiltill Trail. Meeting him was somewhat depressing; he informed them he had been sent to the deserted Hetch Hetchy outpost because he suffered from tuberculosis. He had taken the ranger job originally because he had been told the fresh air and out-of-doors life might cure him. He claimed his condition had improved in his months on the job, but the Duryeas never knew whether he was, in fact, cured.

By the end of the trip, the rigors of primitive camping had begun to tell on Dorothy. She caught a bad cold which confined her to a tent at Yosemite for three days. But she felt she had been fortunate in escaping the dangers of the High Sierra with only a cold. Two campers they heard about later died on the Tiltill Trail from drinking the water of a stream polluted by cattle, and two others had suffered fatally from altitude sickness due to insufficient oxygen.

SO MUCH FOR the camping aspect of their trip; the really significant aspect is their impression of Hetch Hetchy Valley. Fortunately, they remember what they saw quite vividly. The appearance of the valley was beautiful and wild, the

PHIL P. HYDE, COURTESY OF THE SIERRA CLUB

The valley reservoir as it appears today, providing most of the San Francisco water supply.

floor covered with bright flowers in profusion: wild lilacs, tiger lilies, dogwood, forget-me-nots, lupine, paintbrush, wild caraway, and the first snowplants they had ever seen. Beds of primroses grew so high that they reached the horses' bellies. Corn lilies that would dominate the valley later in the season were just beginning to come through the soil in June.

The Duryeas saw many wild animals, including bears and several deer. Dorothy recalls that, because it was early in the season and snow still covered many areas, the deer were very hungry. Whenever she stood behind a tree and held salt in her hand, they overcame their shyness and licked out of her outstretched palm. They also saw many birds, including hawks, mountain quail, and bluejays.

Satisfying his professional curiosity, Robert noted that the location of the proposed dam was perfect. It was at one end of a long, narrow valley (eight miles by one-half mile) with steep sides of solid rock. In his opinion, the valley was a natural reservoir and the decision to build the dam there justified. In response to the crucial question of whether or not the valley should have been converted to a reservoir, the Duryeas answer a qualified "Yes."

Dorothy felt that since the lower part of the valley was more spectacular than the upper part, "it was a shame to inundate it all under water." But she countered the observation by saying that because the trip was so treacherous down the steep slopes, few people would have seen the beauty of the floor anyway.

Robert explained his feelings: "San Francisco got good water, and I don't think it hurt the mountains any. It eliminated a valley similar to Yosemite, but it saved that valley from the fate which has now befallen Yosemite. At least Hetch Hetchy has a beautiful lake, instead of a floor spoiled by tourists and roads built up the middle and tents and campsites by the dozens. The lake protects the valley's beauty."

Someday, posterity may know for sure whether the right decision was made in regard to Hetch Hetchy. That day has not yet arrived. In the meantime, it is helpful to consider the Duryea story in relation to this particular reservoir controversy. It highlights three factors of importance: the wild and incredible beauty of the valley, the conditions people endured to see that beauty, and the tremendous social benefit derived from damming the Tuolumne at Hetch Hetchy. Which of these factors was most important will always be debatable. But it is hoped the Duryea story will illuminate, for some, other conservation controversies of the past, present, and future.

Laura Foster *is on the editorial staff of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

COLLECTOR'S CHOICE

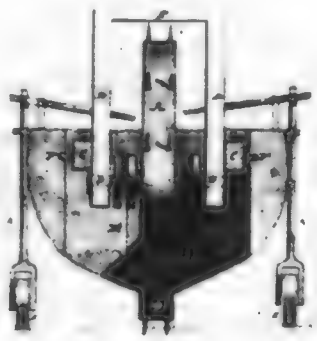
STAYING AFLOAT in the PATENT OFFICE

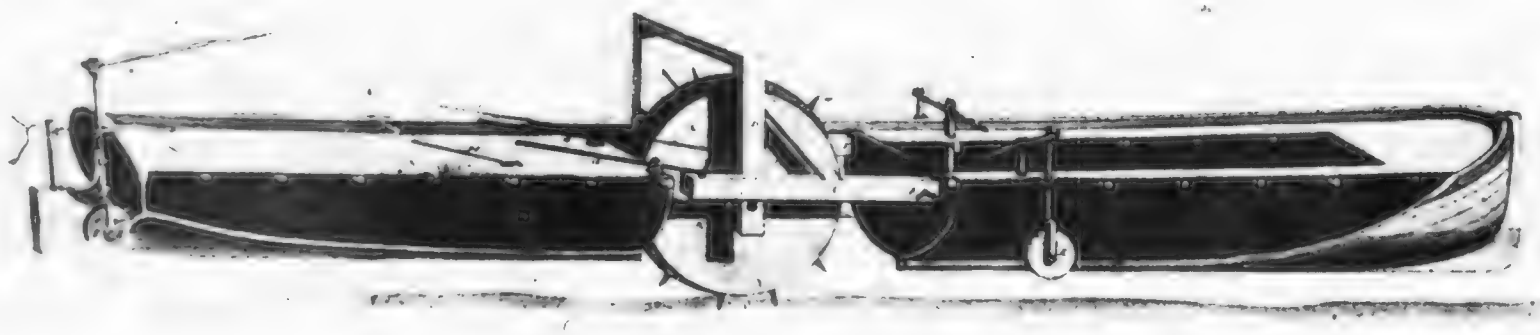
By Morgan Sherwood

PART OF OUR continuing folk tradition of "Yankee ingenuity" derives from a belief that Americans, facing the challenges of nature on the western frontier, were especially stimulated to invent, innovate, and adapt. Certainly the wilderness threshold often called forth new responses from the migrants who crossed over. Whether American adaptations were any different in quality, novelty, or magnitude is still moot, because too few historians of westward expansion and fewer historians of technology have addressed their research to Technology Out West. There are notable exceptions, including Walter Prescott Webb's admirable, though excessively deterministic, *Great Plains*, which elicited somewhat more contention than research.

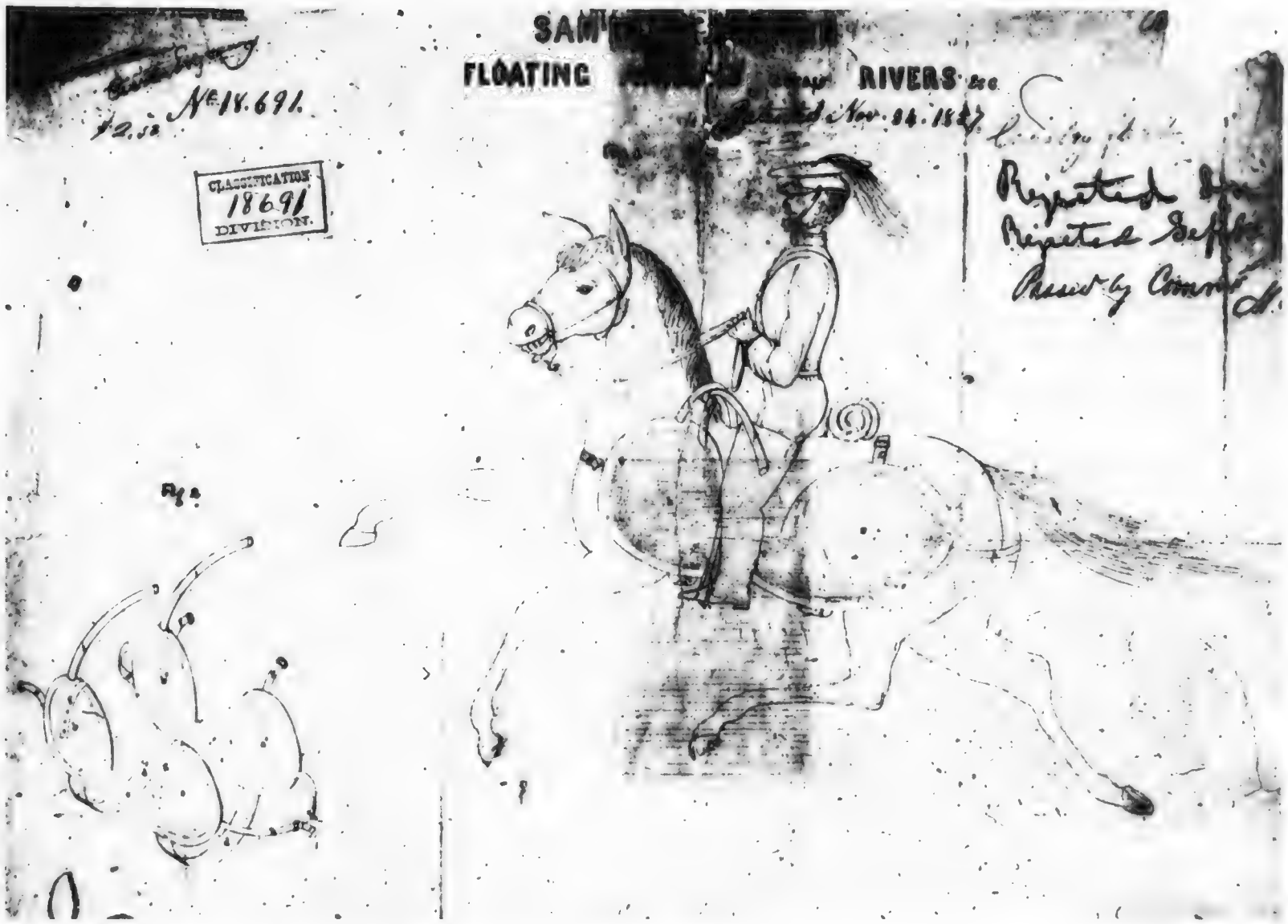
Another part of the idea of "Yankee ingenuity" is tied to our knowledge of the American patent system during the nineteenth century. Many authors have given the system a large share of the credit (or discredit, depending upon your aesthetic sensibilities) for the rise of an industrial United States and American conquest of the middle continent. If those writers are correct, a historian should find among the mountainous patent records some clues to how inventive genius was applied to the problems of the frontier. One way to handle the subject is to follow the advice so frequently urged but so rarely practiced by historians of technology—to study the failures along with the successes. The questionable apparatus have something to say about the U. S. patent system, too. So without apology, there follows a pictorial examination of certain dubious devices patented before the Civil War and designed to help man, beast, and boat stay afloat on the nation's untamed waterways.

Morgan Sherwood *teaches the social history of American science and technology at the University of California, Davis. He wrote* Explorations of Alaska *(Yale University Press, 1965), and is currently studying the nineteenth-century U.S. patent system.*





This shallow-water boat consisted of a spiked wheel which, by revolving and rolling on the bottom of a waterway of sufficient depth to carry boats, would draw or propel them where they could not progress in the usual way with paddle wheels.



Samuel Heintzelman's inflatable saddlebags were devised for a variety of frontier uses, such as fording a roaring river in the untamed West, where a few such floats would prevent delay and serious loss sometimes sustained by using those precarious rafts.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Life-preservers for personal use were patented continually in the 1800s. The buoyant dress, above, afforded the wearer opportunity to walk on water.

This inventor's raft employed spring poles, which held up the forward end of the raft when passing over turbulent falls or eddies.

Don Greame Kelley

TREES

DURING INDIAN TIME on this edge of land, before another world swept in under sail, the several Northwest Coast peoples had achieved a vigorous, competitive, materialistic, art-producing culture—an affluent society. Water and wood, the sea and the forest, were the insubstantial, impermanent bases of both economic and cultural life for a rude but viable civilization, in a world of islands, inlets, rivers, and rain, from beyond Yakutat Bay to the Columbia; its influence and patterns were felt among shore-dwelling groups as far south as Trinidad Bay and the Klamath.

This civilization grew to whatever unity it had, not by political bonds of the white man's sort but out of a distinctive life style. Language was the cement of tribal groupings. Northernmost was the Tlingit, whose fourteen tribes held most of southeastern Alaska. The Queen Charlotte Islands and nearby waters were the "sea kingdom" of the Haida, renowned for great canoes and carved slate. In British Columbia's channeled coastlands lived the Coast Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, and others. The seaward side of Vancouver Island was home base for the Northwest's hardiest and most expert whalers, the Nootka. Indeed, this group, which includes the Makah of Washington's Cape Flattery, and certain other groups of the Olympic Peninsula, were the only ones whose men hunted whales at sea. This required great canoes and greater seamanship.

The seaways of Juan de Fuca and Georgia straits, Puget Sound, and Grays Harbor were Coast Salish country. The Chinook held the Columbia from the Dalles to the sea, and the Tillamook a coastal strip to the south. Various smaller groups hung on to the Oregon and California coast, as far south as the Yurok region of the lower Klamath River.

The Northwest Coast culture grew to its height and complexity because the peoples who anciently came to these shores brought with them the intelligence and skills to take full advantage of an exceedingly bountiful nature. Theirs was not the "settled agriculture" route toward civilization. As completely a "hunting and gathering" people as the abject primitives of Baja California, so far removed in space and material advantage, the Northwest Coast Indians in their heyday enjoyed a paradise of natural resources so

Old totem poles and house posts stand today on Anthony Island (in the Queen Charlottes), ancient home of the Haida Indians. The totem pole at right, also of the Haida tribe, is about forty feet high.

OF THE TOTEM CULTURE

—Their ancient importance in the life and economy of the Northwest Coast Indians

plentiful they could never be diminished, at least by Indian use. For all of time, they must have believed, the fat salmon would run upriver from that sea where whale and otter abounded and shellfish throve at tide's edge; berries would ripen in the forest and the great trees crowd to the shoreline, perpetually yielding canoe and totem pole.

One may fall easily into the view of the vast Pacific Coastal Forest as environmental determinant of that culture complex; the teleological thought is bound to rise as one plots the range of this forest around the northeastern Pacific rim. But the right conclusions may simply be that, with waterways everywhere and land travel all but impossible, boats were needed; with long cold winters and very heavy rainfall, snug houses were needed; that the abundance of easily worked timber for these and many other uses made life a matter of easy problem-solving for good minds and hands. In any event, Indian culture and coastal forest grew together, for a long time. And a triumvirate of noble trees appears to rule in both.

On Kodiak's northern end, as we have seen, and on Cook Inlet's circling shores, stand the dark ranks of Sitka spruce. They appear on the Kenai Peninsula, and follow the Panhandle to the British Columbia Coast Range, gaining altitude on one flank while hugging sea level on the other. The Queen Charlottes know the Sitkas as big, and they thrive on Vancouver Island's ocean side. A gathering of rivers meets Puget Sound tidewater in the somberly graceful presence of Sitka spruce. In the rain forest along the Pacific shore of the Olympic Peninsula they attain their greatest stature and glory, deployed to a depth of thirty miles up the short coastal rivers where ground and air are perennially moist. From northern Oregon the Sitkas reach southward to their final stand on California's Mendocino coast, keeping to the tidelands and especially the mouths of streams.

Remarkably parallel to Sitka spruce in its range on the Northwest Coast, but reaching much farther inland from British Columbia to Oregon, western hemlock is the most abundant tree of the Pacific Coastal Forest .Starting from sea level, this hemlock, like the spruce, thrives on the moisture of lowlands and seaward slopes, but it goes higher into regions of summer sunshine. It extends eastward along the Canadian border to the upper Columbia Basin, from which it reaches to a height of five thousand feet on the Selkirk and Gold ranges.

A handsome tree, the western hemlock sends to the sky a slim leader shoot that arcs gracefully in the wind. Its seedlings do well in denser shade than most others can tolerate, enabling it to dominate large forest areas whenever the mature trees can reach the light. Although it has become extremely important for many industrial uses, this competitive edge has produced an abundance of western hemlock that augers well for the future generations of the species.

Few in numbers compared with the first two, western red

This article is excerpted from *Edge of a Continent,* by Don Greame Kelley, to be published this spring by American West Publishing Company.

At left is a wooden bear mask of the Tlingit tribe; above is a Skokomish group's basket of spruce-root and cedarbark.

A carved wooden figure of the Tlingit tribe. About sixteen inches high, it is made of yellow cedar and human hair.

cedar is nevertheless the giant of the towering trio, considering not merely its size but its role in the life and times of the Northwest Coast Indians. Commonly it is known as "canoe cedar," a name well earned on sea and river waters of this forest region. Not a true cedar but an arborvitae, it was the veritable tree of life for the early peoples of our northern Pacific shore. Coming into its own on the southern islands and mainland of Alaska's Panhandle, the canoe cedar raises its great fluted and conically tapering boles in the wet lowland forests of the Queen Charlottes, Vancouver Island, the British Columbian inlets, Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula, and coastal Oregon and California south to Cape Mendocino. Found also on the slopes of the Cascades and up the Fraser, it reaches to the far inland mountains of British Columbia and south into Idaho. There, in 1805, Lewis and Clark discovered it, and from it made the five pirogues, or dugout canoes, in which they completed their historic journey down the Columbia to the Pacific Ocean.

The greatest western red cedars are found on Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlottes; their respective tribesmen, the Nootka and the Haida, built the most splendid and seaworthy of all Northwest Coast canoes. The most important part of the coastal range of this tree is precisely the region of the highest development of Northwest Coast culture. This tree was the chief material resource, after food, for this Indian way of life.

To live beside a river, along a sea channel, on a peninsular or island shore; to see towering overhead the tree giants which gave cradle, grave-house, and many objects of daily use between birth and death—such was the pattern of Indian generations, the context in which one succeeded another for centuries. The pattern grew intricate as the culture bloomed; but the context remained simple, an elemental one of water and wood.

The waters of ocean and river were the chief sources of food. Salmon came up from the Pacific in numbers past counting; and there were herring and smelt, halibut and cod, and the lower orders of sea food in abundance and variety. Hunting the marine mammals—seal, sea lion, sea otter—brought in meat and valuable skins, but it was also an exercise in skill, prestige, and ceremony. Land animals and birds were trapped,

This cedarwood bowl, made by the Kwakiutl people, has a wingspread of sixty-one inches.

netted, arrowed, speared, and piked. Certain skins were specially valued, but, on the whole, land hunting came second to the sea chase. Plant foods were a poor third in the economy, although berries were popular; and around Puget Sound and on the Oregon coast the camas root was a staple. Acorns entered the diet in southwestern Oregon and northwestern California.

Of the many forest products of the central Northwest Coast region, the most variously useful were those from western red cedar. At birth the Indian had his first experience of something made from the wood: his cradle. For the rest of his life he used all manner of cedarwood containers—boxes, canoes, cooking vessels, houses. There was almost no end to the sizes, shapes, and functions of the famed Northwest Coast cedarwood boxes, their sides of a single plank, with corners kerfed and steam-bent, tops and sides exquisitely carved and painted with simple or elaborate designs. In every box, a plain cedar board thus became part of the signature of a people.

Cedarbark was no less prized a material. From Tlingit territory in southernmost Alaska to that of the Chinook on the Columbia, the bark of red cedar was bound up with the life

of the Northwest Coast Indian even more intimately than the wood. Shredded fine as cotton, it swathed him in the cradle; and it was woven into robes, skirts, and other garments. Baskets to hold tools, pouches for harpoon heads, mats to sit on or spread a feast upon, ceremonial armbands and headgear, mattresses, even sails for canoes when the first crude copies of European canvas were made—these and many other things were fashioned of shredded cedarbark. The Indian's last contact with this essential stuff was likely to be within his burial wrapping.

Both bark and wood of red cedar were traded to groups living outside the region of the great tree's abundance. The north had a rival textile fiber in Alaska yellow cedarbark. Throughout the Northwest, other fibers were variously used: spruce root, alone or with cedarbark, for baskets; nettle for fishing cordage; goat wool along with cedar in the celebrated Chilkat blankets. Other woods had their uses, too: alder or yellow cedar, easily carved into masks and bowls without splitting; yew, toughly resilient for bows, harpoon foreshafts, and wedges for riving out cedar planks and posts. Maple and oak served these purposes in the south where, at the limits of the region, redwood replaced cedar for construction uses. But throughout the heartland of the Northwest Coast, western red cedar was of all natural resources the one most in evidence in the material culture of this well-endowed young civilization.

Multifamily dwellings, lofty totem poles, and seagoing canoes were the big, bold strokes of the Northwest Coast signature in cedarwood. A forest as well as a sea people, the Indians of this culture doubtless used an instinctive forester's eye in selecting trees—this one for house timbers, that slender pole for carved figures proclaiming lineage and status, to stand richly colored and proud before a chief's lodge. For that most difficult technical achievement of these people—shaping a hull over fifty feet long and sturdy enough to sail hundreds of miles at sea (whose superb lines, some historians say, inspired the American clipper ship)—none would serve but the mightiest monarch of the grove.

The great cedar must be approached with appropriate spirit, felled as befitted its stature, worked with utmost patience and skill. They chose a tree near the shore for straightness, girth, and clear grain. They felled it in winter—with chisels of stone, horn, or shell, driven by heavy mauls; with massive chopping adzes; or by cutting a hole in the windward side of the base, making a fire in it, and letting the bole burn for two or three days, with a good draft, until the tree fell by itself. They left it to dry, then came with adzes and roughed the outside shape. Some hollowed out canoes with fire, carefully controlled; others did the tedious job with adzes and chisels. After shaping the log, judging the thickness between their hands, the craftsmen filled the hull with water, added hot stones, covered it with cedarbark mats, and let it steam. As the wood softened, they gradually stretched it with thwarts until they had the proper hull width.

All in all, the sheerlines and curves of the sides, the proportions, finish, and general workmanship of the great Northwest Coast canoe made it a first-rate seagoing vessel, even when paddle-driven. Masts were stepped and sails added only

(continued on page 63)

This and its companion on the opposite page are both shaman carvings, memorials to a highly respected member of the tribe.

Puget Sound's WAR WITHIN A WAR

By IVAN DOIG

THE CIVIL WAR, described perhaps since its first shot as a conflict among brothers, certainly was that for the office-holding brethren of Washington Territory. They did not fight with rifle and sword, however; the northwest corner of the United States was too remote from the front to play any important role militarily. Instead, from 1861 through mid-1865 Mr. Lincoln's army of Republican territorial officials fought among themselves about political power.

President Lincoln had dispatched an assortment of political mediocrities to the territory when they pestered him for jobs. There, various issues kept their fights hot and fluid. But one man in particular—Victor Smith, U.S. collector of customs for Puget Sound—distinguished himself by inspiring a local conflict of his own when he turned the cannon of an American revenue cutter onto an American town.

Smith emerges as a bizarre soul, a mystic so busy in worlds of his own that legends continually arise trying to explain him. A description from his day pictures him as lean, sandy-haired, and dyspeptic-looking. He seems to have had boundless capacity to convince himself he was right. With such collateral, Smith came to the town that first was his duty station but soon became his target, Port Townsend.

In 1861 Port Townsend was Washington Territory's port of entry. It boasted about two hundred and fifty people, a reputation for hard drinking, and a Republican newspaper. And in August of that year, Mr. Lincoln's new administration sent in the Republican customs agent, Victor Smith, a political crony of Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase.

Smith reacted to his new station rapidly. Nothing personal against Port Townsend—at first, anyway—but he thought the customs house would look better forty-five miles west. A virgin town site called Port Angeles would be dandy, he enthused to Secretary Chase; among its advantages beckoned twenty-five acres freshly bought by Victor Smith.

Such an idea inevitably would make the people of Port Townsend regard Smith as a one-man Mongol horde. But they weren't the only ones. Even given the passions of the Civil War years and of frontier politics generally, Smith had a profound ability to make enemies anywhere. The man was a lodestone for calamity.

Smith, a reporter on the Cincinnati *Commercial* before the Civil War, must have laid tracks into his political future in the late 1850s, when Salmon P. Chase became governor of Ohio and a power in the new Republican party. When Lincoln in 1861 hooked his major political rivals into his cabinet to watch them, he handed Chase the Treasury portfolio.

Chase appointed Victor Smith as a Treasury agent and then Puget Sound customs collector. One rumor held that Smith was Chase's cousin; another insisted that Smith held the posts because of debts Chase owed him.

In the first days of the Civil War, Smith hurried from his home near Cincinnati to Washington, D.C. Family legend and his own bravura make it impossible to know just what he did there, but maybe he did, as he said, help build pontoon bridges needed by the Union army. His son Norman recalled that when his father told the family to meet him at Harper's Ferry, they arrived just after a soldier had pinked Smith above the watch pocket with a bayonet. The family's version alleges the soldier was drunk, but possibly Smith had been showing his knack for making people mad at him.

Almost certainly Smith's helpfulness burdened Chase so much that the secretary talked him into inspecting the Union's prospects in the Pacific Northwest.

In May 1861, the Smith family sailed for Washington Ter-

The* Brother Jonathan *ended Victor Smith's career.

A fight for political power in the mid-nineteenth century

The* Shubrick, *whose cannons threatened Port Townsend.

ritory. When they first arrived, relationships with the new neighbors in Port Townsend did not seem to have been so bad. People blinked a bit, however, when word went around that Smith had touched his deputy collector for a $100 loan on his first night in town.

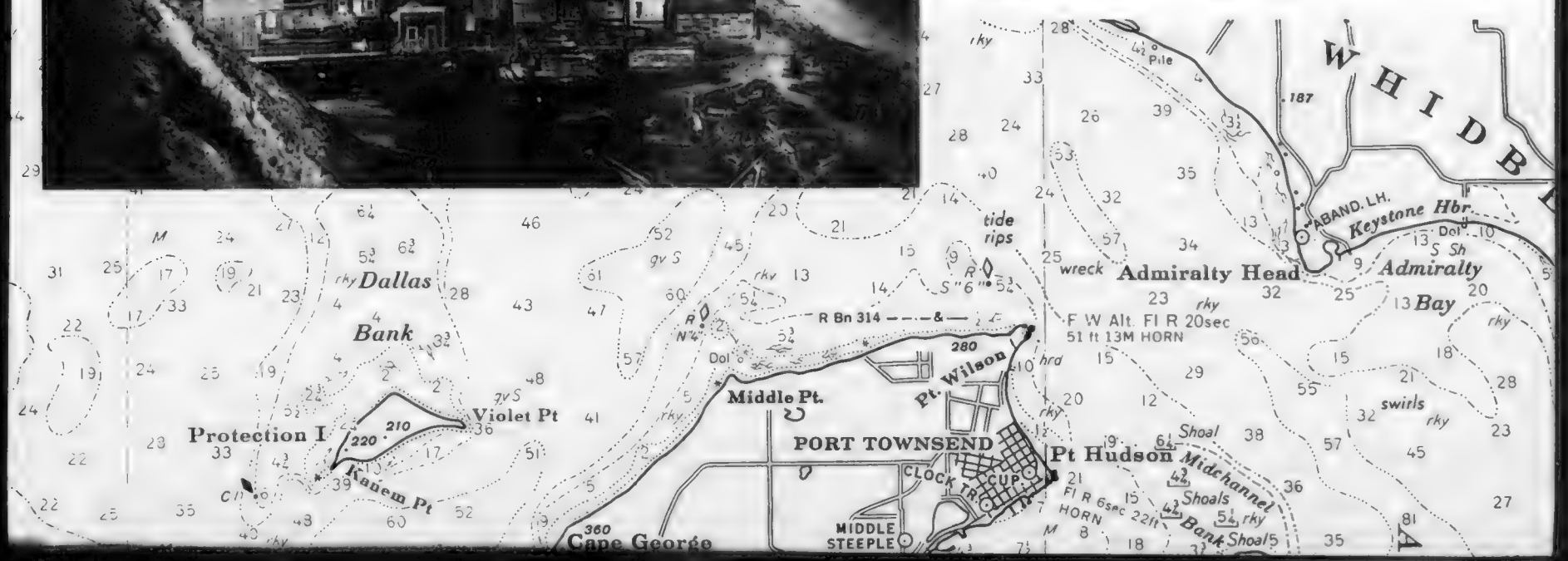
Then Smith became customs collector instead of special agent, and the schemes the enterprising official had in mind began unfolding, each a jump ahead of Port Townsend's rising choler. He wangled the job of lighthouse keeper at Cape Flattery for his father, a footloose sort who had been in California since the 1849 gold strikes seduced him. Smith wooed local editor John F. Damon with patronage plums in an effort to take over Port Townsend's Republican newspaper, the *North-West*. And most hideous of all to Port Townsenders, he decided the U.S. customs house should be moved. Since collecting customs was Port Townsend's main reason for existence, the customs house was no small matter to it.

But Smith prized it, too, if for other reasons. On August 17, 1861, he advised friend Chase: "My attention has frequently been called to the infelicitous location of the Custom House Office for the District.

"Port Townsend is not a harbor, but a rather open roadstead where vessels not provided with excellent ground tackle are sometimes driven ashore in the winter storms. There is no fresh water to be had within two miles of the Custom House, and lastly, it is not near enough to the entrance from the Ocean to be convenient to the considerable number of vessels destined for ports northeast of Whidby Island. I am not now prepared to recommend a more suitable harbor, but there are several on the Straits, either of which might be preferable to Port Townsend."

SMITH WROTE TO CHASE in the same vein on October 4, 5, and 29, and on December 4. But by even the first of this series, he had solved his perplexity about a better site.

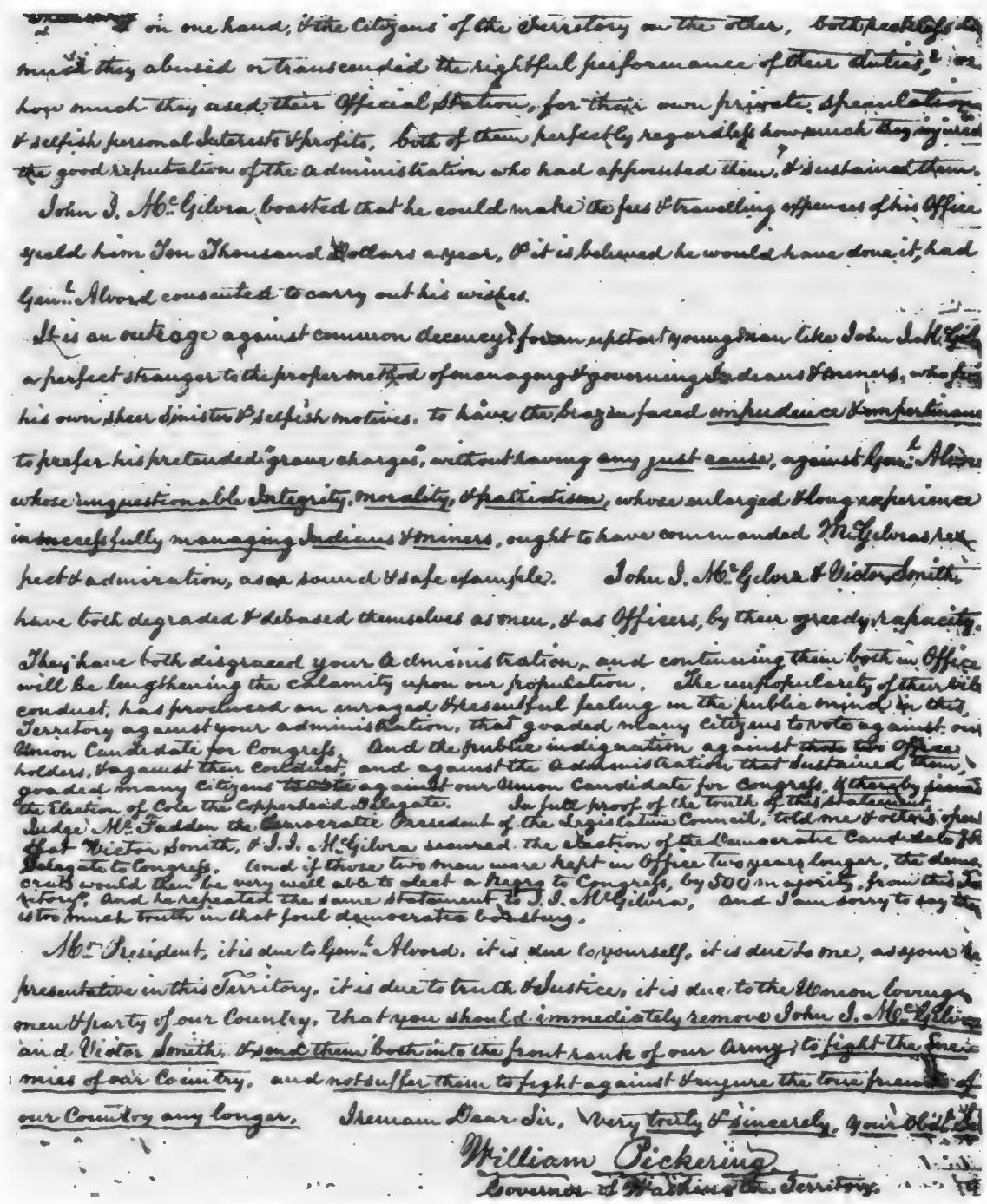
Port Townsend was endangered by Smith's commandeered cannon in the dispute about the U. S. customs-house records. Shown here in 1865, it was the Puget Sound port of entry before Smith moved the customs house to Port Angeles; the town regained this function after Smith's death.



Port Angeles! Not, Smith assures his secretary of the treasury, that he and his town-planning partners seek undue wealth: "Port Angeles is wholly owned by five Proprietors who have legally and publicly bound themselves to limit their possible profits, at any time, to an aggregate of Fifty thousand or Ten thousand dollars each, any excess over that sum (arising from the sale of lots) being secured to the town for roads, schools, churches, etc."

Among his other attributes, Victor Smith could be a galloping liar when he put his mind to it. In this same letter he informed Chase: "I have already contracted for a controlling interest and sole Editorial Conduct of the only newspaper in the northern part of this Territory—to be called the 'Port Angeles Herald,' devoted, of course, to the national recognition of Salmon P. Chase." However Smith defined "the northern part of this Territory," there were at the time two newspapers in Olympia, one at Steilacoom, and the *North-West* at Port Townsend.

But a littie later, in scoffing at reports that he hoped to move the customs house or that he held any financial interest in the Port Angeles site, Smith performed absolute miracles of bland denial. On December 10, 1861, he wrote to the *Overland Press* in Olympia to reassure Puget Sound residents: "As Collector for the District of Puget Sound, I have not made any recommendation for the removal of the Custom House."



in one hand, & the Citizens of the Territory on the other, both peaceably & must they abused or transcended the rightful performance of their duties, & or how much they used their Official Station, for their own private speculations & selfish personal interests & profits, both of them perfectly regardless how much they injured the good reputation of the administration who had appointed them, & sustained them.

John J. McGilvra boasted that he could make the fees & travelling expenses of his Office yield him Ten Thousand Dollars a year, & it is believed he would have done it, had Genl Alvord consented to carry out his wishes.

It is an outrage against common decency & for an upstart young man like John J. McGilvra a perfect stranger to the proper method of managing & governing Indians & Miners, who for his own sheer sinister & selfish motives, to have the brazen faced impudence & impertinence to prefer his pretended "grave charges" against Genl Alvord whose unquestionable Integrity, morality, & patriotism, whose enlarged & long experience in successfully managing Indians & Miners, ought to have commanded Mr McGilvras respect & admiration, as a sound & safe example. John J. McGilvra & Victor Smith, have both degraded & debased themselves as men, & as Officers, by their greedy rapacity.

They have both disgraced your administration, and continueing them both in Office will be lengthening the calamity upon our population. The unpopularity of their bad conduct has produced an enraged & resentful feeling in the public mind in this Territory against your administration, that goaded many citizens to vote against our Union Candidate for Congress. And the public indignation against those two Office holders, & against their Conduct, and against the administration that sustained them, goaded many citizens to vote against our Union Candidate for Congress, & thereby secure the election of Cole the Copperhead & Slavery Delegate. In full proof of the truth of this statement, Judge McFadden the Democratic President of the Legislative Council, told me & others of his staff that Victor Smith, & J. J. McGilvra secured the election of the Democratic Candidate for Delegate to Congress. And if those two men were kept in Office two years longer, the democrats would then be very well able to elect a Negro to Congress, by 500 majority from this Territory. And he repeated the same statement to J. J. McGilvra, and I am sorry to say there is too much truth in that foul democratic boasting.

Mr President, it is due to Genl Alvord, it is due to yourself, it is due to me, as your representative in this Territory, it is due to truth & Justice, it is due to the Union loving men & party of our Country, that you should immediately remove John J. McGilvra and Victor Smith, & send them both into the front rank of our Army, to fight the Enemies of our Country, and not suffer them to fight against & injure the true friends of our Country any longer. I remain Dear Sir, Very truly & Sincerely, Your Obt Servt

William Pickering
Governor of Washington Territory.

Governor Pickering's letter suggesting the removal of Smith and McGilvra.

Actually, he had written Chase at least five times urging precisely that. On November 29, 1862, he wrote to territorial legislator J. W. Bagley about the Port Angeles site, vowing "I made no claim to a foot of land [there]." Maybe Smith delighted in word games. He didn't have a foot of land, perhaps, but back in April he had bought "seven-fortieths of the land claimed by the Port Angeles Townsite Company" for a cool two thousand dollars. After assuring Bagley he had no private interest in Port Angeles, he closed by urging Bagley to work in the legislature for "this magnificent seafront."

THERE ARE WHEELS within wheels, the old spiritual advises, and this notion explains a lot about the political scene in Washington Territory during the Civil War. Victor Smith wasn't the only federal officeholder with distinctive foibles; his simply crooned a bit more remarkably. Smith's enterprises spun along only within the context of other political and personal plans, and this means some of the other territorial officials should be met briefly.

Governor William Pickering became an especially warm enemy of Smith. An Englishman who moved to Illinois in 1821 and later served in the state legislature, he ranks as one of the battalion of small-town politicoes Lincoln spotted around in territorial jobs. Pickering does not appear any worse than the run of Washington's territorial governors in that era and may have been better than several. The distinctive feature of his administration, however, was his habit of writing novella-length letters to officials in Washington, D.C., a good proportion of them seeking Victor Smith's hide.

The territorial court, with which Smith found his foes were always trying to harpoon him, boasted three judges, who presided at the district courts.

Christopher C. Hewitt, the chief justice, apparently never much liked the job after he pestered it out of Lincoln, and exerted himself accordingly. Smith did his best to get Hewitt fired after disagreement over a smuggling case.

Associate Justice Ethelbert P. Oliphant had asked Lincoln to be made minister to Denmark, Switzerland, or The Netherlands; or "in case you are perplexed about the marshalship for the western district of Pennsylvania I will take that." Perhaps the only thing more puzzling to Oliphant than his assignment to the Pacific Northwest was legal argument. Judge Oliphant was noted for sometimes changing his ruling with every speech by the contending lawyers. Surprisingly, Smith and Oliphant appear to have gotten along together, perhaps because the judge was busy with a mischievous territorial legislature that packed him off to remote mining camps.

Associate Justice James E. Wyche, a lean, unkempt Mississippian, is the only one of the trio known to have been shot at while serving in the playful Northwest. This distinction may have helped to inspire his December 1863 letter to Lincoln offering himself as the Reconstruction governor of his home state. Wyche appears the most intelligent and capable of the three judges. It follows that he seems to have taken pains to stay clear of Smith.

The U.S. district attorney for these gentlemen, John J. McGilvra, shared some of Smith's extreme passion against anyone who did not look to be a 200 percent Union man. Smith liked and respected McGilvra, who does not seem to have held much against him no matter how stickily things were going. But McGilvra was burned early when he found that even mentioning someone for a customs job when Smith asked for a recommendation ignited all manner of anti-Smith forces. After that, McGilvra too kept his distance.

Surveyor General Anson G. Henry knew Lincoln. That qualified the aging doctor for his job, and he believed it made him the Republican patronage boss of the territory as well. Here, of all Smith's feuds, was the most spectacular. Henry was a Lincoln man, Smith a Chase man; both aspired to the loudest voice in Washington politics. Each sought to gut the other's career through the good graces of patrons in the national capital.

In time, all these figures would have one thing or another to do with Victor Smith's maneuvers. But Victor Smith, Salmon P. Chase, and an obscure revenue service lieutenant named James H. Merryman were all the personnel needed to begin the gunboat episode.

Silence can't be counted as one of Smith's strong points, and so Port Townsend residents soon heard that their customs man indeed intended to make off to Port Angeles with their customs house. With Chase's influence, Smith did exactly that in June 1862. But meanwhile, Smith felt the need to go to Washington, D.C., an impulse that came upon him rather frequently.

He asked Captain Chaddock of the revenue cutter *Joseph Lane* for an officer to act as customs agent for a couple of months. Lieutenant Merryman was tapped, and on May 2, 1862, Smith turned the customs house over to the officer and left. Smith usually had his way with revenue service officers.

Merryman poked around in the customs house records. After a few days, either out of horror at the Smith system of bookkeeping or out of desire to cadge the job for himself or some of both, Merryman decided to blow the whistle on Victor Smith. "I was startled," he wrote early in a fourteen-page letter to Treasury Secretary Chase, "to find evidences of fraud and official misconduct of the most glaring character."

Merryman obviously could not tell for sure what Smith's chaotic records added up to, but he believed several instances he cited meant Smith had been using federal funds for his own benefit. For one thing, the customs house funds seemed to be at least $4,354.98 short. At the end of several pages more of charges, Merryman thoughtfully signed off: "As Mr. Smith has asserted here that you were so completely surrounded by his personal friends that no report against him could possibly reach you, I hope I may be excused for sending a copy of this to his Excellency the President assuring you that no disrespect to you is thus intended."

The lieutenant carried on as customs collector until, on August 1, Victor Smith steamed in on the revenue cutter *Shubrick*. He knew what was up with Merryman; he had been in the capital when the officer's letters started flowing in. And as of June 19, thanks to Chase's influence in Congress, the Puget Sound port of entry had been legally transferred to Port Angeles. Smith probably was both triumphant and bitter when he informed his homecoming crowd that he had come for the customs house records.

According to newspaper versions, Lieutenant Merryman felt that among Smith's original sins had been failure to post bond properly for the customs post. He argued that Smith's first commission was invalid and told him he would yield the records only if Victor could display fresh authority for them. Smith declined to do so. No records then, the lieutenant vowed. Smith retorted that he, Lieutenant John E. Wilson commanding the *Shubrick,* and the steamer's three cannon would just have to shell the customs house and, not so incidentally, Port Townsend. Lieutenant Wilson, commanding the ship during the captain's illness, showed up to say he considered himself bound to follow Smith's orders.

Merryman thought this over.

Meanwhile, Smith withdrew to the *Shubrick*. But before long he was back to report the ship's twelve-pounders had been double-shotted, and Port Townsend had fifteen minutes until doomsday.

Merryman and what Smith later described as "more or less of a mob of sailors and others" thought some more. They

figured Smith might open fire, and they likely were right. Finally, the customs house records and safe were surrendered, and Smith went off on his gunboat.

As Port Townsenders could not get their hands on Smith aboard the *Shubrick*, they went to court. They had tried before, back in February when Smith was still in town and word of his passion to move the customs house had seeped out. The grand jury had marched into court one day and told Judge Oliphant that Smith had insulted its character and integrity. In a rare moment of clarity, Oliphant told the jurors it was not their assigned task to debate about Victor Smith. District Attorney McGilvra, not very diplomatic even in calmer days, called the jury secretary a liar three times.

But in September the citizens had better luck. A grand jury sitting in Olympia returned true bills against Smith on sixteen counts. Most charged embezzlement or other financial shenanigans, but there was also a couple of counts against Smith and Lieutenant Wilson charging assault with intent to kill. U.S. Commissioner Henry McGill, meanwhile, tried to arrest the pair, but Lieutenant Wilson declined, on his own behalf and Smith's, to accept any warrants.

Smith's enemies by now were chasing after him in all directions. Governor Pickering arrived in Port Townsend aboard the *Eliza Anderson*, stayed a half hour, and went on to Victoria to visit the governor of British Columbia. He also hired a couple of lawyers at $100 a head to look into the Smith affair. Port Townsenders found Pickering's actions somewhat less than optimum.

Back at Olympia, Anson Henry before long headed for Washington, D.C., with a vendetta against Smith high on his agenda. The heat had penetrated even to the national capital before that, however. Chase was forced to send treasury agent Thomas Brown to look into the episode. Brown reported things were just fine, and Port Townsend's ire rose some more.

Smith and the *Shubrick* were reported to be at Victoria and then at San Francisco, but customs house records show Smith was at Port Angeles by October 24, 1862, carrying on business more or less as usual. Not for long, however. On December 10, Deputy Collector P. D. Moore noted that his boss had been called to San Francisco for a few days. Nearly five months later, he returned. Yes, he had been to Washington, D.C.

Smith had weathered the efforts made against him. For instance, on February 13, 1863, Anson Henry had called on the secretary of the treasury with a note written by President Lincoln: "Will the Secretary of the Treasury do me the favor to hear my old friend, Dr. Henry, briefly on Victor Smith?" Chase stuck with Smith, and by then already had spiked the territorial legal guns trained on his man's wake. On February 2, Solicitor of the Treasury Edward Jordan passed along to District Attorney McGilvra instructions from Chase to drop all court proceedings against the customs collector.

So, Victor Smith came home to Port Angeles, which by mid-1863 had mushroomed into a village. He wasn't an inhuman sort, despite his standing in Port Townsend. Occasionally he made fitful efforts to patch matters up with an enemy. And now in May 1863, he tried to dislodge the salaries due the two customs men who had worked under Lieutenant Merryman, although he made it plain he had not forgiven them. But perhaps Smith felt he had won and could afford to be generous.

Smith fell out of his collector's job by the end of September 1863. Lincoln put pressure on Secretary of the Treasury Chase, admitting that Smith might be innocent but concluding "the degree of dissatisfaction with him there is too great for him to be retained."

By this time Chase was showing more and more presidential cravings; before long he would have his backers on Capitol Hill sending up trial balloons for his candidacy. But Abe Lincoln could read the political wind, and he apparently paid

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Dr. Anson G. Henry, Smith's most avid foe.

particular attention to Chase's ambition. A cabinet colleague thought Chase "was the only human being I believe Lincoln actually hated." So, the President kept on playing his game with Chase, saddling him with a job too important to be lightly cast aside but too far backstage to compete with A. Lincoln, presidential candidate come 1864.

PERHAPS UNEASY, Chase often melodramatically "resigned" when he did not get his way. When he did so over Victor Smith's removal, Lincoln as usual smoothly compromised with him. Smith would have to be let go, but Chase could find another job for him. Chase made him a special treasury agent again, and Smith went right on living in Port Angeles and exasperating the citizenry of Puget Sound.

Soon Smith was off to Washington, D.C., again, and so was not at Port Angeles when disaster struck on December 16, 1863. In the Olympic Mountains south of town a mud slide choked off the creek. When the mud gave way, a torrent ripped into Port Angeles. Caroline Smith saved herself and the children, but Victor's prized customs house was not as lucky. The customs office was swept away and two of the customs men in it drowned.

The memoirs of Smith's son, Norman, show that the family believed Smith was off on undercover treasury missions during his frequent absences. Perhaps he was. But he spent a lot of time in Washington, D.C., arguing and rearguing the Port Townsend drama, Lieutenant Merryman's charges against him, and his charges against Lieutenant Merryman.

A good deal more of the usual acrimony swirled around Victor Smith for the following year or so, until the next murky chapter began. In early summer 1865—on still another trip to Washington, D.C.—he left for New York to catch the steamer *Golden Rule*. Norman Smith's version has his father in charge of a bundle of currency and bonds going to the San Francisco sub-treasury. Down through the years the magical sum has become three million dollars.

Two competing legends have grown out of this voyage. The lone certainty is that Smith's gift for disaster came through again. The *Golden Rule* piled up on a reef. Smith's family always said the sub-treasury money disappeared when the captain and an accomplice snitched it from the wreckage. Smith's enemies only snickered at this and said the money had disappeared somewhere in the vicinity of Victor Smith.

Whatever happened, Smith tried another ship in late July 1865, this one the *Brother Jonathan* out of San Francisco for Puget Sound. It promptly sank. Another passenger was the surveyor general of Washington Territory, returning from an extended visit with the Lincolns and long efforts to get Smith fired or tried or something. And so, Victor Smith and Anson G. Henry disappeared from this world's quarrels when both went down with the *Brother Jonathan* off Crescent City, California, on July 30, 1865. It was the only tidy ending in Victor Smith's entire Pacific Northwest career.

The Smith family continued to live in Port Angeles, where Victor's son Norman tried to establish a communitarian colony years later. The people of Port Townsend, probably with the barest pause to congratulate themselves that the god of natural disasters at last was on their side, set about reclaiming the customs house. They succeeded in 1866 and hung onto it until the office was moved to Seattle in 1912.

Finally, even with Smith and Henry gone, none of the contending officeholders managed to get a firm grip on the Washington Territory political situation. Within a few years, they all were out of office, and a reformed Democrat captured the Republican patronage power that they and Victor Smith and Anson G. Henry had spent the Civil War fighting over.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The author's research has uncovered no good, full account of Victor Smith's four years on Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Much of the material comes from letters, newspapers, and books mentioning Smith only incidentally.

Much of the personal information on Smith and his family is from the memoirs of his son, Norman Smith, serialized in the Port Angeles (Washington) *Evening News*, beginning June 9, 1950.

Letters by or involving Smith can be found in the Puget Sound customs-house letter books for this period at the Federal Records Center in Seattle; in various collected papers of the University of Washington Manuscripts Collection, Seattle; and in papers of the Treasury Department, the Attorney General, and the Department of the Interior in the National Archives.

Washington Territory newspapers carried many articles about Smith between late 1861 and late 1865. The *North-West* (Port Townsend), *Washington Standard* (Olympia), *Overland Press* (Olympia), and *Puget Sound Herald* (Steilacoom) offer considerable material on Smith and a lot more criticizing him.

Murray Morgan tells a portion of the Smith story delightfully in *The Last Wilderness* (New York, 1955). Noah Brooks, correspondent of the Sacramento *Union*, who knew both Victor Smith and Anson Henry, provides revealing reminiscences about both in *Washington in Lincoln's Time* (New York, 1895). Thomas G. and Marva R. Belden have written a biography of Smith's patron, Salmon P. Chase, entitled *So Fell the Angels* (Boston, 1956). Smith's arch-foe has two brief biographies, both called *Dr. Anson G. Henry*. The one by Harry E. Pratt is a reprint of article in the *Lincoln Herald* (vol. 45, nos. 3 and 4, 1943). Harry C. Blair's version draws on this.

The material mentioned above on Governor Pickering and the territorial law officers was gathered as part of a larger work the author is undertaking. The University of Washington Law School library holds material on most of them.

Special thanks are very much in order to Mrs. Hazel E. Mills and Mrs. Nancy Pryor of the Washington State library; the entire staff of the Northwest Collection at the University of Washington and the staff of the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma; Mrs. Horace A. Brecht at the Port Townsend research library; and Mr. Richard C. Berner and his staff in the Manuscripts Collection at the University of Washington library.

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JOHN F. STEVENS
Pathfinder for Western Railroads

By EARL CLARK

FROM CALIFORNIA all the way to Canada, a mighty barrier seals off the lush Pacific coastlands from the dry sage-speckled interior. This is the Cascade Mountain Range, a jumbled upthrust of volcanic peaks towering up to fourteen thousand feet, with icy streams tumbling through deep canyons, crevassed glaciers, vast snowfields, and on the lower slopes, dense forests of trees with trunks as thick as a wagon. It was not just happenstance that led Lewis and Clark, and later the Oregon Trail pioneers, to make their way to the Pacific by way of the Columbia River. For the Columbia Gorge is the only natural break in this formidable bulwark for all its thousand-mile length.

As more and more settlers filled the coastal lowlands, they probed for other passageways than the Columbia to bring their wagon roads and railways through the snow-topped Cascades. It was never an easy search. Even today, only about a half dozen passes pierce this forbidding rampart.

Few are more spectacular than Stevens Pass in Washington state, the northernmost of the Cascade crossings. Its name memorializes the great engineer who discovered it—John

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Frank Stevens. Yet Stevens himself has faded to a historical footnote. So little is he known to present-day beneficiaries of the pass he discovered that one popular Seattle guidebook erroneously ascribes its name to Isaac Stevens, first governor of Washington Territory. Yet the man who searched out this pass in the midst of a trackless wilderness lived to see it play an essential role in the growth of Seattle and the development of the entire Pacific Northwest.

Now a four-lane highway whisks vehicles over the summit to which he fought his way on foot. Skiers by the thousands flock to its slopes all winter long. Deep beneath its granite bastion, the longest tunnel in the Western Hemisphere carries Burlington Northern trains through the mountain barrier. And that, of course, is how Stevens Pass came to be—as a route for Jim Hill's Great Northern Railway.

When the roll is called of Men Who Built the West, the name of James Jerome Hill rises high on the list. He was one of the nineteenth century's great railroad barons—but not a robber baron. Hill was, of course, an unabashed capitalist. But unlike so many of his fellow railroad tycoons, he insisted on building an efficient transportation system, not just a road to quick profits. His railroad's crack train today perpetuates one of the sobriquets by which he was known—that of the Empire Builder.

Hill was, in the words of the late Stewart Holbrook, "a legend while he lived, a legend still in death . . . the Little Giant, the Devil's Curse of the northern plains, the barbed-wire, shaggy-headed, one-eyed old sonofabitch of Western railroading."

He was also a man who dreamed great dreams, and none was more dominating than his dream of linking the Midwest with the Pacific by a ribbon of steel. It all began with the grandiosely named St. Paul & Pacific Railroad, a struggling little Minnesota line that Hill acquired for one hundred thousand dollars in 1878, when he was barely forty.

Jim Hill carried into the rebuilding of rickety pike the principles that were to guide his railroad operations until his death in 1916. When he built a railroad, he built it to last. Roaring and raging, he drove his engineers and contractors unsparingly to find the best grades, the easiest curves, the strongest bridges. This was vital to his operations because, unlike the other transcontinentals, Hill's Great Northern never received the government largesse of land grants. In fact, when he laid his rails across Montana, he had to pay the government to cross Indian lands.

But when Hill announced, a year after buying the modest little St.P&P that was to become the Great Northern, that he intended to push it through to Puget Sound without one dime of subsidy from the federal government, his St. Paul neighbors erupted in laughter. "Hill's Folly," they called the ribbon of steel as it advanced across the Great Plains, three to seven miles a day, 1,175 miles in a year, inexorably pushing through the endless expanse of waving grass.

As fast as track was laid, Hill's trains brought immigrants to settle this new land, mostly from northern Europe. He'd haul a man halfway across the United States for ten dollars if he agreed to settle along the line; and for only a little more, the homesteader could rent a box car and bring along the rest of his family, their possessions, and a few animals.

Laying rails across the prairies was one thing. Getting them through the Rocky Mountains was something else. When this great obstacle loomed ahead on the horizon, Hill called in a brash young engineer who had demonstrated a canny knowledge of railroad building along with the kind of stamina that was a hallmark of the West's fabled mountain men. He was John F. Stevens, then still in his thirties.

Born in West Gardiner, Maine, April 25, 1853, Stevens came west at the age of twenty-one, going to work in the Minneapolis city engineer's office. He had no technical training as an engineer; he received his education at a country school, followed by two years at a normal school in Farmington, Maine, where he studied to be a teacher.

By the time he reached thirty, he had spent six years learning the ropes of railroad location and construction in various western states. In the spring of 1883, he was offered his first major engineering assignment, as assistant to the chief engineer in charge of locating the Canadian Pacific Railway through the Canadian Rockies. Much of the mountain scenery that CPR passengers view today lies along the route surveyed by Stevens. It is possible that this work brought him to the attention of Hill, who was a director of the Canadian line until he resigned to build a transcontinental of his own.

By 1889 the Great Northern had completed its line to Havre, in north central Montana, but was stymied by the mountain barrier ahead. It was imperative to find a route that would take the rails directly west. Veering too much off this course would add mileage and gradients that would burden Hill's railroad with a permanent handicap in competition with the established transcontinentals. So Hill's chief engineer, E. H. Beckler, looked for someone with the ability to scout out a legendary pass that was supposed to exist in that region, and if it existed, ascertain its suitability for the railroad. He settled on John F. Stevens as his man.

"Time was pressing, and Mr. Hill was not a man to delay the execution of his plans once he had decided upon their general features," Stevens recalled later with dry understatement. Or to quote Hill's own orders to his chief engineer: "We do not care enough for Rocky Mountain scenery to spend a large sum of money in developing it. What we want is the best possible line, shortest distance, and least curvature that we can build between the points to be covered."

Stevens took on his new assignment in November, starting at Fort Assinniboine, a military post seven miles west of Havre, whose commandant furnished him a mule team, a covered wagon, a soldier driver, and a saddle horse. Battling blizzards all the way, Stevens and his companion set out for

The Cascades, looking south from the top of the barrier above Stevens Pass.

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the Blackfoot Indian Agency, 180 miles away.

There Stevens sought information about the mystic pass that was reputed to thread the great mountains beyond the Indian lands. But no Indian would stir from his log house in that winter weather to seek it. Or for that matter, any kind of weather. Those mountains were the lair of an evil spirit, they insisted, and woe betide the mere mortal so adventurous as to disturb him.

Stevens finally ran onto a Flathead Indian who had fled after murdering one of his tribesmen and was given refuge by the Blackfoot tribe. "He knew nothing whatever of that part of the country, and was not a guide in any sense of the word," Stevens recounted. "I only wanted him to act as a messenger in case I met with disaster."

For a lesser man, that disaster might have been a surety. Stevens and the Indian set out with a mule team and "patched up something that resembled snowshoes." They kept the team until deepening snow brought the mules to a floundering halt, then sent the animals back and went on by foot, carrying food and blankets.

They soon found what appeared to be a pass, but it curved around and ended abruptly against a mountain wall. Retracing their steps, they tried another route, but it too ran into a dead end (later labeled False Summit).

"Something, possibly a sixth sense, urged me to keep going," Stevens recalled later. But by then the Indian signaled that he had had enough and would go no further. Stevens scrounged some dry wood, built a fire, and left the Indian beside it, picking his way on up the mountain alone.

To his happy astonishment, he perceived after several more arduous miles that he had reached a low summit of the Continental Divide and was looking down the western slope of the Rockies. He had found the legendary Marias Pass! That date of December 11, 1889, was to remain forever engraved in Stevens' memory. (If passengers on today's Empire Builder look quickly enough out the windows of their dome car as it glides over Marias Pass, they can see beside the tracks a bronze statue of the engineer who discovered it.)

Just to be sure he had really found the pass, Stevens explored on down the western slope until he was at last satisfied that its waters did indeed drain into the Pacific Ocean. He was on his way back to join his Indian companion when the evil spirits that the Indians feared called down their wrath upon this audacious young explorer who had dared to unlock their secret.

It was dark by the time Stevens had scrambled back up to the pass. To try and pick his way back down the icy slopes and deep snow of the canyon he had followed that morning would have been foolhardy. The snow swirled around him as the wind whistled through the pass, and the temperature dropped steadily to what Stevens estimated was forty degrees below zero. There was no chance of building a fire to thaw out his scanty frozen provisions, as only the tips of stunted evergreens protruded through the snow. Stevens knew that if he tried to get a moment's rest, he would freeze to death. So he tramped a path that would bear his weight without snowshoes, then for the rest of that bitter long night walked back and forth, back and forth, until the first streak of daylight glimmered in the east.

BOTH FROM THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN

Four elevations of switchbacks climbed this mountain (top); in 1892, workmen laid the last segment of the main line (right).

BOTH PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Burlington Northern trains now escape the heavy snows of Stevens Pass by using the eight-mile-long tunnel at right. The original is at the left.

His route down the canyon now covered by new snow, Stevens slipped and slid back to where he had left the Indian, who was now nearly frozen to death himself, beat some life back into him, and then started the journey back to the agency. There then remained a mere 180-mile trek to a telegraph station to wire the great news to Jim Hill.

HILL'S CONFIDENCE in his young engineer soared. With a pass through the Rockies now assured, he sent Stevens on west in the spring of 1890 to seek a way to get the railroad over the rugged Cascades, with instructions to explore every possible route between the Northern Pacific line to Tacoma, and the Canadian border.

"Hill's Folly" seemed even more absurd when measured against the remote frontier he was struggling to reach. The population of the entire state of Washington at that time was less than 375,000. Most of this populace was scattered along the line of the Northern Pacific, far south of Hill's surveys, and on Puget Sound, where Seattle's 37,000 made it the state's largest city. A map of that era showed the north central part of the state through which the Great Northern must pass as a mountain wilderness unrelieved by so much as a single settlement.

It was not, however, unsurveyed. Twenty years earlier, the Northern Pacific had sent an engineer, D. C. Linsley, to survey the Cascades for a possible crossing. Accompanied only by three Indians, Linsley spent ten weeks in the summer of 1870 mapping and charting the mountain range, and suggested several routes across it. These were generally to the north of the one later discovered by Stevens, and thus even farther north of the route the NP eventually used to reach Tacoma via Stampede Pass.

Back in St. Paul, Hill was now in a burning hurry to locate the road through the Cascades. His crews had surveyed 565 miles of right of way west of Marias Pass, with track gangs pushing close behind. Hill's dream of a transcontinental railroad to challenge the older lines depended on reaching Puget Sound, and fast.

Methodically bringing to bear all his mountain expertise, Stevens set out in the spring of 1890 to find the best place to carry the Great Northern's rails over this final barrier. Many years later, he was to deny indignantly that he stumbled across the pass more or less by accident.

"On one of my cruises up the Wenatchee River I noted a large creek [Nason Creek] coming into it from the south, well up into the mountains," he wrote. "I knew that its course could not long continue from the south, and so followed up a short distance to where it turned abruptly, coming from the west. Realizing that it must head at a summit in the main range, I filed that mental picture away in my head for future investigation. A short time afterward when I was cruising the top of the main range, I found a comparatively low place in it, against which a creek flowing east had its head. I felt certain that it must be the beginning of the same creek that I have noted above."

Following up this hunch after returning from his explorations, Stevens dispatched an engineering party led by C. F. B.

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The Stevens Pass area, although today a haven for skiers, must have appeared ominous to Stevens and his party as they pushed forward in the West.

ED COOPER

Haskell to "proceed up Nason Creek and develop its head." Haskell indeed found that the creek debouched in a pass whose elevation was 4,061 feet—about half the height of some of the peaks that overlooked it. He honored its discoverer for all time by blazing a cedar tree at the spot and marking it STEVENS PASS.

By this time winter was approaching, and Stevens hastened to organize another engineering party to survey the Skykomish River valley down the west slope of the Cascades beyond the pass. The results were disheartening. Everywhere, the mountains dropped off in an abrupt escarpment. The only way to avoid it was to tunnel beneath the forbidding cliffs. But this would require a tunnel two and a half miles long, and it would take years to bore with the primitive equipment of the time. Jim Hill couldn't wait that long.

In midwinter of 1890, Stevens snowshoed back to the summit, now buried under its usual thirty feet or so of snow, and pondered the alternatives. His brilliant solution was a series of switchbacks to carry the rails over the summit, then conquering the steep grade by a great horseshoe loop at Martin Creek, the first spot where the valley widened enough to accommodate the loop. The distance to be covered was only

Stevens as a young man (above) and in 1925 (right). The ceremony, dedicating the statue in his honor, commemorated the date that Stevens rediscovered the "lost" Marias Pass in the Rockies. The statue is located at the railway's summit station in the pass.

driven on the west slope of the Cascades. Jim Hill had finally linked the Mississippi with Puget Sound.

But the Cascade crossing demolished Hill's credo of moving maximum tonnage over minimum grades and curves. Stevens was able to hold the grade to a maximum of 2.2 percent coming up through the Wenatchee River's Tumwater

(continued on page 62)

four and a half miles as the crow flies. But Jim Hill's engines couldn't fly up the cliffs, so they traversed twelve miles of track in order to negotiate that distance over the mountain.

Looking over the plans back in St. Paul, Hill hit the ceiling when he noted one point at which Stevens called for a thirteen-degree curve. He ordered work suspended, jumped on a special train, and came roaring west to see this monstrosity for himself. Stevens felt time was of the essence, so he kept right on with the grading. Hill's greeting when he came striding up to the young engineer was simply: "Where is that thirteen-degree curve? I don't like it!"

While the rest of the entourage trembled, Stevens calmly led Hill to a point where he could look over the terrain. "That is all right," the empire builder said finally. "You could have done nothing else." Instead of firing the determined engineer, Hill raised his salary from $200 a month to $300.

It took three more years to build the line through those rough mountains, but on January 6, 1893, the last spike was

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Golden Dreams and SILVER REALITIES

The Mechanics of Civilization on the Mining Frontier

By T. H. WATKINS

THE MECHANICS OF civilization as they were exhibited in the towns of the mining frontier have been blessed—or cursed—with a profound amount of discussion through the years. With the exception of the mythos of the cowboy, no other real or almost-real phase in the development of the West has come under such fascinated scrutiny, displayed in everything from two-reeler "B" movies to esoteric monographic flagellations. Probed, described, articulated, exploited, questioned, argued, interpreted and misinterpreted, it has been run through every medium of analysis save a computer —and in this age of rampant cybernetics that probably is not too far behind.

The fascination is easily enough explained: such towns were the product of a society re-creating itself in a highly accelerated form—almost as if we were privileged to observe the history of, say, Boston, with all its drama, bathos, conflict, and even nobility, crowded into a few short years. A history condensed is a history more easily comprehended.

Or so it might seem. The trouble is, that very condensation inspired an exaggeration of what are seen as essential elements —the drama, the sometimes inspired hijinks, and the insouciant disregard for the prose of life. The history of the mining community was bitten at an early age by Bret Harte, further infected by Charles Howard Shinn, and put into a nearly terminal condition by a small army of local historians, whose loving-hands-at-home chronicles have swaddled it in a tangle of breathless myth having to do with gamblers, saloons, whores with platinum hearts, outlaws, gunfights, instant millionaires, miners of Arcadian virtue, and vigilante excitements —a two-dimensional view of three-dimensional history.

Well, the process of myth-making is one of our oldest and most revered traditions, and such flamboyant elements were in fact a recognized part of the mining frontier. But it was more than all this—a good deal more. Beneath all the patina of legend lie some important realities which may reveal something important about the dynamics of a society transplanted, and even more significantly, perhaps something important about the quality of the American character.

BOTH PHOTOS: DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY WESTERN COLLECTION

Geographical logic has nothing whatever to do with the location of a proper mining town. Whether slapped together in the middle of a desert, on the side of a mountain, or crammed into the bottom of a canyon, the only excuse for the existence of such towns was the presence of gold, silver, or some other mineral capable of unhinging the minds of men. Design could take care of itself. Above, a street scene in Creede, Colorado. At right, a couple endures the slush of a storefront tunnel in Breckenridge, Colorado, during the "Big Snow" of 1898.

Golden Dreams and SILVER REALITIES

A Tattered Democracy

MUCH HAS BEEN MADE of the democracy of the mining camp. Even the normally skeptical historian Hubert H. Bancroft was moved to describe California's miners as "Simple, honest, earnest, they affected nothing, and in the direction of self-government attempted nothing which they failed to accomplish. . . ." It was true that men did live in an atmosphere of remarkable equality, at least during the first few months of any camp's existence. Generally speaking, one man's chance was as good as another's—providing that race and nationality were sufficiently the same.

As usual (then or now), democracy tended to be selective in nature. It did not include Indians, who were either ignored or hunted down and killed; it did not include Mexicans, who were characterized as "greasers" and systematically cheated, browbeaten, and held in monumental contempt; and, especially, it did not include the Chinese, who were subjected to a campaign of open discrimination as long-lived as it was ultimately successful.

Word of the discovery of gold in California reached the China coast perhaps later than most other regions of the world, but by late 1849 and early 1850 it was common knowledge among the residents of Toishan Province some two hundred miles southwest of Hong Kong. Most of the Chinese who indentured themselves in order to get to California over the next few years were from this province; they were called Gum Shan Hok—guests of the Golden Mountain—and by the end of 1851 there were more than twenty-five thousand of them in California.

During the better part of 1849, the Chinese were accepted as a slightly curious but in no sense threatening element in the California scene. After all, their motives were almost precisely the same as those of the rest of the goldseekers, as Gunther Barth reports in *Bitter Strength:* "The life of Chinese indentured emigrants revolved about three primary objectives: to earn and to save money, to pay off the indenture, and to return home to their families in China for a life of relative ease." Besides, there would be plenty of gold for everyone. The Chinese—quiet, industrious, and infinitely more patient than the Anglo miners—spread throughout the Mother Lode.

By the end of 1850, it was becoming obvious to all concerned that there was not and would never be enough gold to go around. That being the case, it did not seem logical to the forty-niners that foreigners should have the same free opportunity to get at what was left as proper Americans. So in 1850, a Foreign Miners' License Act was passed by the California legislature, imposing a monthly tax of twenty dollars (roughly comparable to a day's wages) on immigrant miners.

Ostensibly, this was to be applied impartially to all foreigners, but in fact it was only enforced with regularity on the immediately visible foreigners—which is to say, Chinese and Mexicans, and most steadily on the former. Sporadic lynchings and semi-pogroms were featured throughout the state during the generally depressed period of the 1850s, but the Chinese hung on, and in their payment of the Miners' License fees contributed more than one million dollars to the county treasuries of the Mother Lode between 1850 and 1860.

Nevertheless, feeling ran sufficiently high for Governor John Bigler to ask the state legislature in 1852 to prohibit further contract immigration; the legislature refused, but his action set the pattern for a systematic program of legislative efforts against the Chinese over the next thirty years, climaxing with the passage of a Chinese exclusion bill in 1882.

By then, the Chinese had wandered into nearly every major mining region in the West, from eastern Oregon to Colorado, and the antipathy exhibited in California was carried with them. They became convenient scapegoats for all sorts of frustrations and agonies in a society evolving from frontier to civilization—and leaving people behind in the process. "Whenever the American myth of unlimited opportunity for each and every individual needed reassurance," one historian has written, "the mere presence of the Chinese . . . offered a ready explanation for the gap between ideal and actuality. It might not be an intelligent or well-founded explanation, but it satisfied deep emotional requirements even as it vouched for the adequacy of the American dream."

Thus it was that Samuel Bowles could write in 1865: "To abuse and cheat a Chinaman; to rob him; to kick and cuff him; even to kill him, have been things not only done with impunity by mean and wicked men, but even with vain glory. . . ." In 1871, riots in Los Angeles killed twenty-two Chinese; in 1877, several Chinese were killed and beaten in San Francisco and other California towns; in 1878, the entire Chinese population of Truckee was rounded up and driven out of town; in 1880, there were anti-Chinese riots in Denver; in 1885, riots in Rock Springs, Wyoming killed twenty-eight Chinese; and in 1886, a pogrom in Log Cabin, Oregon.

This dismal chronicle suggests that the vaunted democracy of the mining frontier had its limits.

Chinese workers in California, 1851.

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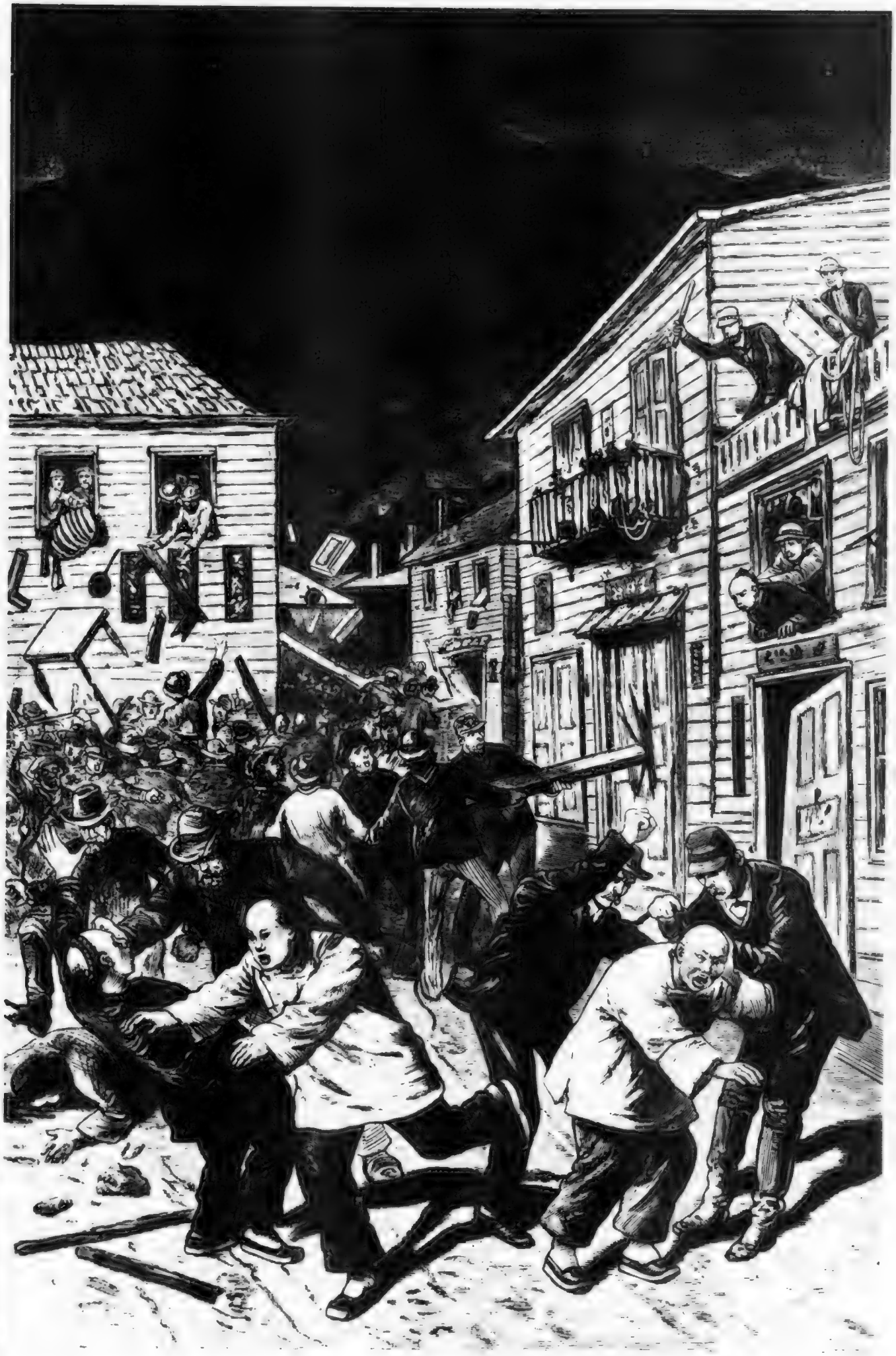
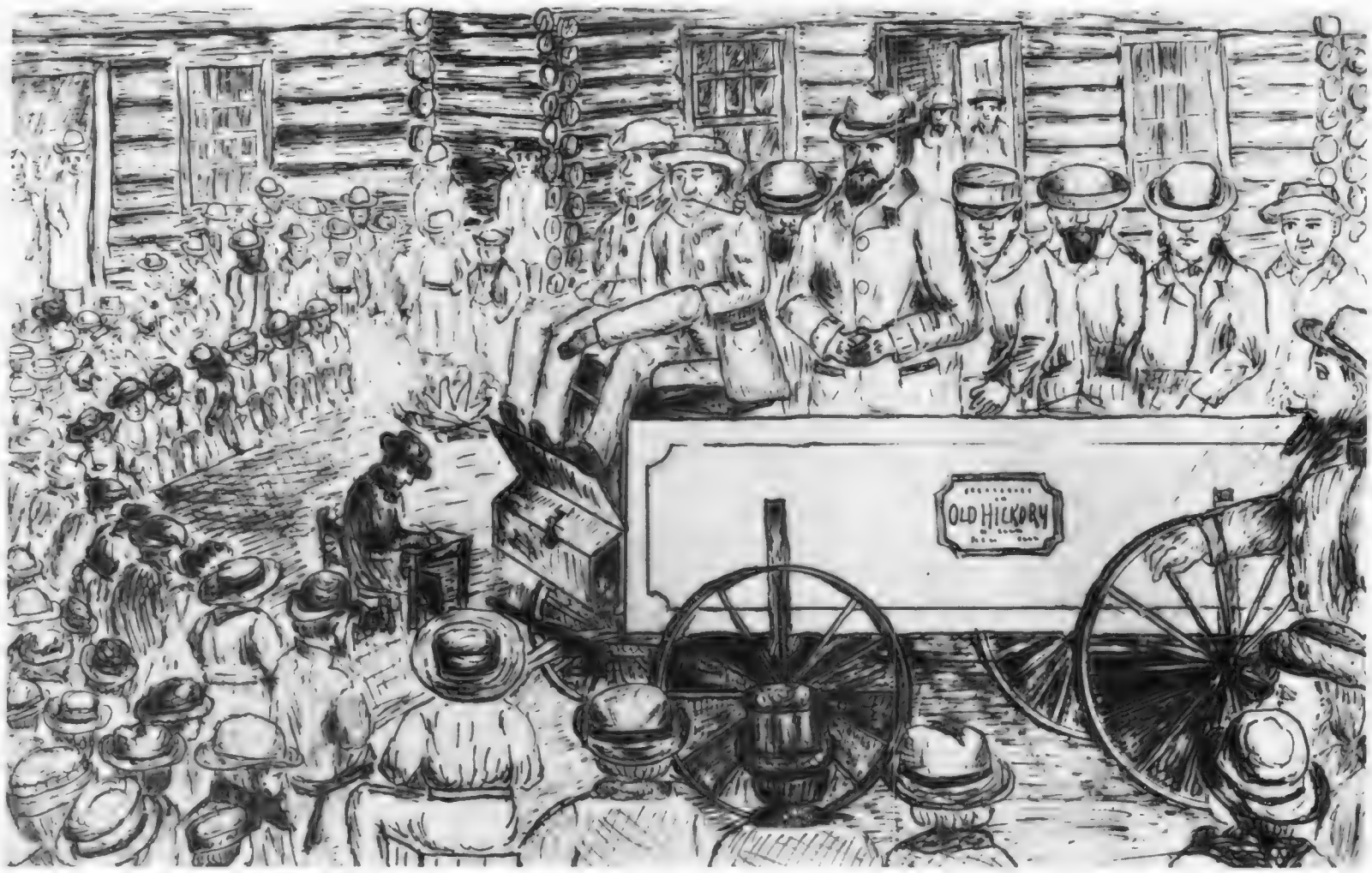


The good citizens of Denver express an opinion in October, 1880.



Truth reached by a shortcut: a Miners' Court in action in Virginia City, Montana, 1863.

SOMETHING OF THE QUALITY of civilization brought to the West by the mining frontier is suggested by its attitudes toward minorities. Perhaps an even more telling indication can be found in the question of law and order.

In most cases, western miners plunged into an environment utterly void of government. Since it was necessary to live with one another long enough to reap the benefits of their treasure-seeking, they had to come up with some kind of governmental system, and to fill the vacuum they devised what came to be known as "Miners' Law." Its most immediate concern was the establishment of rules concerning the ownership, extent, and transfer of mining claims, but it also applied itself to the question of keeping the peace.

Methodology was simple to the point of being primitive: only such serious crimes as murder, theft, and reasonless assault were considered significant enough to be dealt with; once an alleged malefactor was apprehended, he was given the form of a trial by a "miners' jury," which might be twelve good men and true or the entire community, with arguments presented by men extemporaneously appointed to serve as defense and prosecuting attorneys; once a verdict was reached, punishment was swift and brutally to the point: the convicted was either executed, branded, flogged, or banished from the district, depending upon the seriousness of his crime.

It was, to say the least, an imperfect form of justice, however swift and efficient, and although it worked well enough to keep men from constantly robbing and murdering one another, it fell considerably short of the accolade given it by Charles Howard Shinn in his *Mining Camps: A Study in American Frontier Government* (1884): "Rude mountain courts, rude justice of miner camps, truth reached by short cuts, decisions unclouded by the verbiage of legal lexicons, a rough-hewn, sturdy system that protected property, suppressed crime, prevented anarchy. . . ."

Another factor may have been at work besides expediency. Miners' Law gave every man the opportunity to participate in government of a high order of drama, one that provided moments of passion and power, a grim and self-satisfied conviction that the miner had taken part in something of great and sober purpose.

Most men who populated the mining camps of the West were young, and fired by all the certitudes typical of youth; most were away from the more-or-less stable societies of the East or the more settled regions of the West for the first time in their lives. The exercise of the power inherent in Miners' Law—wonderfully direct and with immediate and visible consequences (hangings, floggings, et al.)—was heady stuff for men whose normal encounter with the forces of law in their old lives would more than likely have had something to do with taxes. Heady—and perhaps hard to give up.

Miners' Law existed near the borderline between civilization and anarchy. Vigilante Law—its natural extension—existed *on* that borderline, and sometimes crossed over. Swift, temporary, and profoundly extemporaneous, Vigilante Law was justice on the half-shell, with all the inadequacies typical of Miners' Law and with few of its virtues.

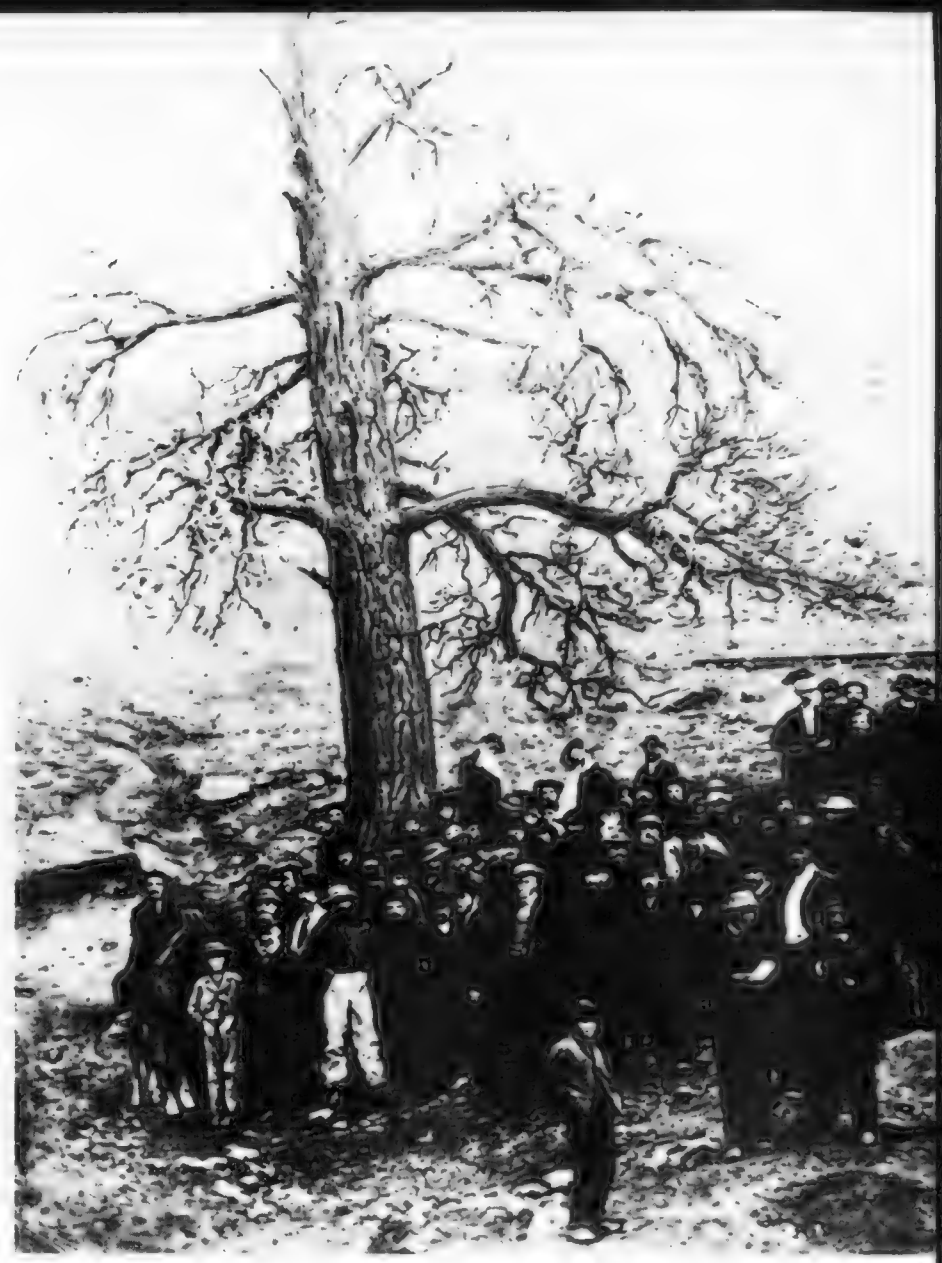
No vigilante action would be quite as dramatic as that in the gold camp of Virginia City, Montana, in 1864. For two years, Virginia City had been harassed by a band of cutthroats whose homicide count reached a total of 102 before the citizens of the town felt themselves sufficiently outraged to make the transition from apathy to hysteria.

A Committee of Vigilance was formed, and between January 4 and February 3, 1864, it captured and either killed outright or executed by due process of hanging twenty-six members of the gang. Its members had performed what Charles H. Shinn called "a solemn duty laid upon them as American citizens." There is no questioning the effectiveness of the committee's performance; it was the single most lethal vigilante undertaking in the history of the mining West.

For all its color and adaptability to the needs of myth, the tradition of vigilantism contributed little to the evolution of civilization. To view it with the hushed reverence accorded it by Charles H. Shinn—as many still do—is to ignore one important if somewhat ignoble fact: vigilante action became "necessary" simply and only because dream-seeking miners cared so *little* about law and order that they cheerfully allowed an almost hopeless situation to develop before doing anything about it. Those who promoted and participated in Vigilante Law did so less out of any shining dedication to the principles of righteous government than because lawlessness had reached a point where it could directly affect *them* personally—either by killing them or making off with their property (it is not always easy to determine which was more important).

Up to that point, lawlessness was a purely abstract question, as noted by historian Roger Olmsted: "The populace would acquiesce in cases of flagrant miscarriage of justice, would suffer an active criminal element to operate almost unchecked, would ignore jobbery, bribery, and all kinds of public chicanery—but it would not be *run over.*"

There is one more aspect to the question of vigilantism in the West that needs examination—although to look at it at all is slightly unnerving, as if one were lifting the corner of something covering up a dark and unacknowledged blank in



Summary justice: Helena's overworked "Hanging Tree," 1870.

the American character: a kind of grisly relish in the mechanics of death. Consider one incident in the career of the Montana vigilantes which illustrates the point. A posse of one hundred men cornered an outlaw in a mountain cabin. Before his capture, the man managed to kill one of his pursuers and wound another. In a nearly unconscious state, he was pulled from the cabin; the man he had wounded was allowed to empty his pistol into his body; a noose was placed around the neck of the already dead man, and he was hoisted over the limb of a tree; for the next few minutes, a hundred eager rifles played target practice with the swinging corpse; his cabin was then ignited and the body cut down and thrown on it for cremation.

Such incidents did not dominate the story of justice in the mining West, but they occurred often enough to color it ghastly in at least some of its parts. That quality was present —sometimes invisible, sometimes evident—in the mechanics of civilization on the mining frontier. If one cares to reflect upon it, as the percipient Josiah Royce did nearly a century ago, it suggests "a world of horror behind the scenes."

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Golden Dreams and SILVER REALITIES

Of Camps and Cities

ONE OF THE MOST DURABLE confusions common to discussions of the mining frontier lies in the question of just what constituted a mining camp, that atomistic phenomenon ruled by greed, gamblers, saloons, whores, Miners' Law, and vigilantes. Too often, the term has been utilized with the sublime vagueness of a politician defining the meaning of free enterprise, and this broad application tends to obscure one important fact: the mining frontier was in most of its parts an *urban* frontier, a process of city-making, and the bulk of its story has about as much in common with the colorful antics frequently attributed to it as the birth and growth of East Orange, New Jersey.

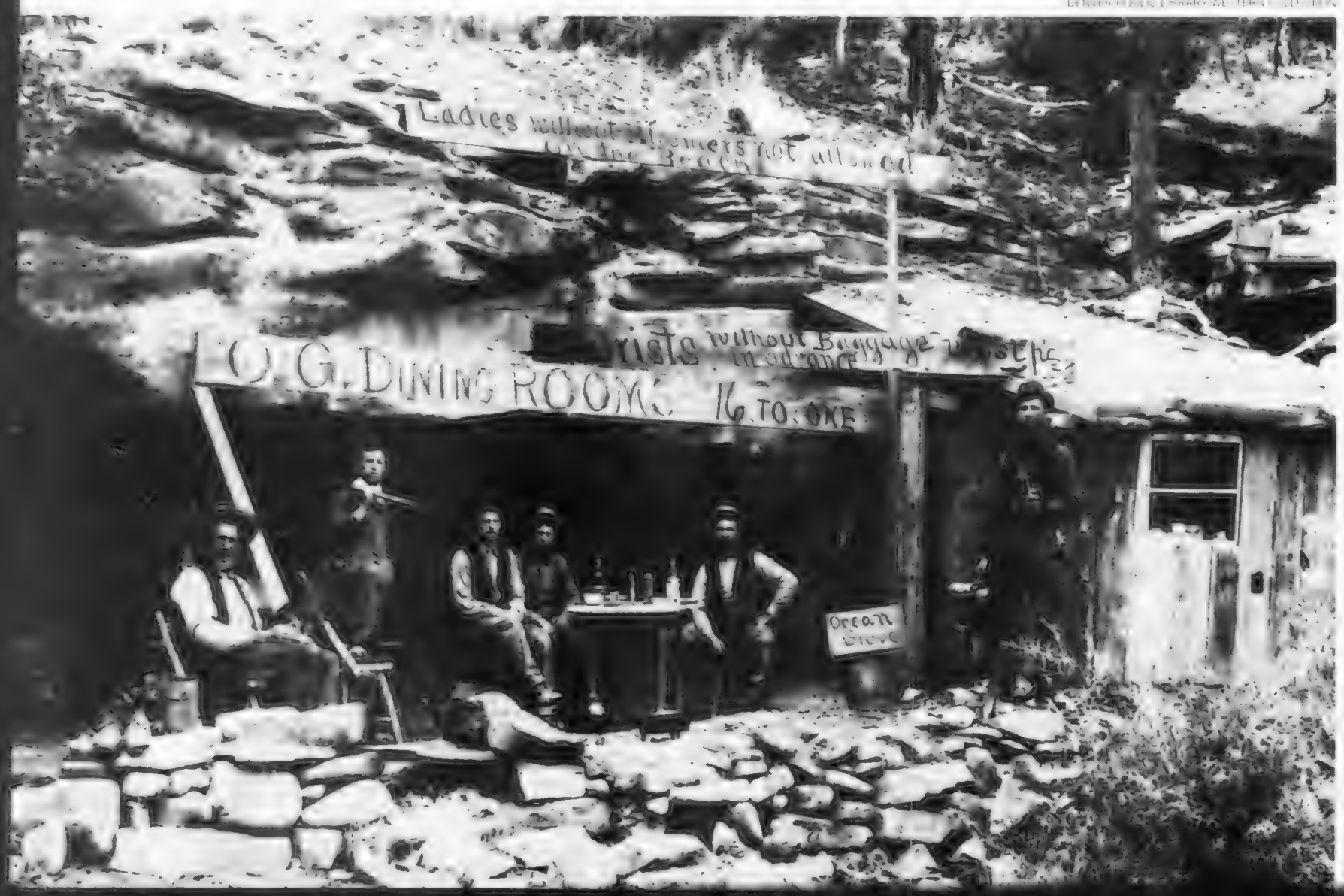
"Mining camp" is thus a term that should be used only in its narrowest sense, for it was a singularly transient and short-lived institution, with a character and quality all its own—a purely extemporaneous exercise in slapping together the basic ingredients necessary for men to function without being done in by the elements or their own natural anarchy. It lasted no longer than it had to last, and either disappeared altogether or was transmuted into something else—frequently within a matter of months. A mining camp, after all, was not a settlement; it was a collection of men whose principal purpose was to survive long enough to get rich—and then get out.

Most of those who populated any given camp in the West were simply infatuated with dreams, as noted by the *Alta California* in 1850: "Bright visions of big lumps of gold and large quantities of them, to be gathered without any severe labor, haunt them night and day . . . hope to find a land where the inevitable law of God that 'Man shall earn his bread by the sweat of his brow' has been repealed, or at least for a time suspended. . . . Temptations are about them on every hand. They drink and they gamble. They associate with men who, in their eastern homes, would be shunned by them as the worst of their kind. . . . They sink lower and lower."

Such conditions did not make for a stable society, and it is little wonder that mining camps scattered all over the West were ridden by almost uncontrolled crime, gambling, whoring, drinking, and all the other paraphernalia from which our myth-making has come.

Unfortunately, that myth-making has spilled over into areas that should be viewed in other lights. In most of the West, the mining camp as an institution enjoyed a brief spurt of life, then was quickly absorbed if the gold or silver deposits which inspired its existence in the first place showed promise of permanence. Ambitious development of any given mining region required time, capital investment, a labor force, supplies, materials, capable management, and all the other elements of industrial enterprise. It also required a stable government and a community that could satisfy the economic needs of corporate mining and the social needs of those who connected themselves with it.

Characteristically, the evolution from camp to town—and, in the more ambitious phases, city—was remarkably brief. Thus, Leadville, Colorado, could be described in early 1878



as consisting of seven log cabins and three hundred miners—only eighteen of whom had bothered to incorporate the town itself—and less than four years later could be characterized as a dull little industrial city, "like some provincial town," as a visiting Englishman described it. Similarly, swift change came to every mining district of consequence in the West, including Denver, Helena, Virginia City, Boise, Deadwood, Cripple Creek, and Butte. Some, like Wardner, Idaho, or Ruby City, Nevada, hardly bothered with the camp phase at all, becoming almost instant industrial cities.

Civic improvement was the primary concern of any camp-become-city and possibly the single most telling difference between the two, for it indicates the fact that residents had acquired a stake in the area; they intended to stay, perhaps even rear families around them almost in the pioneer tradition, and were willing to sacrifice at least a part of the quick dollar in exchange for a livable environment.

Macadamized and cobbled streets, gas—and later, electric—lighting, sewer systems, water lines, and public transportation were among the refinements visible in various mining towns as early as the middle of the 1880s—in regions that little more than a generation before had been as unfamiliar with civilized trappings as the mountains of the moon. Business sections, where practicable, took on the massive solidity of brick or stone architecture, and homes acquired lawns and gardens. Fire departments—at first voluntary and later municipally owned and operated—were organized and equipment purchased, and police departments created.

With such physical improvements came those of a more social, or cultural, order. Each town soon acquired one or more major hotels, in many cases of a substantiality and even luxury to challenge the best the East could offer. Schools and churches, social clubs and reading societies attended themselves to the higher needs of the mind and soul, while music halls, theaters, and opera houses (few of them having much to do with opera) satisified the craving for more rambunctious entertainment, although respectable enough. The opera house, in fact, was a particularly symbolic manifestation of civic arrival; the town that could afford a theater of a size and architecture to justify the label of opera house was a town to be reckoned with.

Add to such things the fact that nearly every major mining town in the West had some sort of railroad and telegraph connection with the centers of the East by the middle of the 1880s, and it is clear that applying the word "camp" to such

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At left, placer miners on the San Miguel River, Colorado, improvise the amenities with blunt humor. At right, top to bottom: N. W. Savage—home office, Pueblo—opens a branch in Cripple Creek; a miner hams it up for the clientele of a saloon in Encampment, Wyoming; an entrepreneur provides the oil of civilization in Creede, Colorado; and a restaurant graces the desert of Chloride, Arizona.

muscular exercises in municipal growth is not only inaccurate but misleading. To go further and assume that the peculiarly undisciplined, free-wheeling life of the frontier camp was translated whole into a metropolitan structure is to write history as we like it, not as it was.

While it is true that the social structure of a town like Helena in 1880 was less rigid than that in Boston, with a genuine tolerance—even affection—for idiosyncrasy, it possessed no more vices, and was no more accustomed to random violence than New York City—in fact, it probably was *less* accustomed to it, since New York was ridden with crime and corruption on a fantastic scale in these years, with a hopelessly undermanned police department, teeming ghettos, and an arrogant and open criminality (some things never change).

The "frontier," if it existed anywhere in the mining municipalities of the West after the first years of boom, existed largely in the minds of its inhabitants, and in the memories of their descendents.

T. H. Watkins *is an associate editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST *and author of* The Grand Colorado: The Story of a River and Its Canyons *(1969) and* Gold and Silver in the West *which will be published by American West Publishing Company in the fall of this year. The preceding article has been adapted from the book.*

Helena, Montana (née Last Chance Gulch) typified the evolution from camp to city common to all the major districts of the mining West. Below, the town is seen shortly after its founding in 1864. On the opposite page, Helena stands twenty-five years later, positively shouting enterprise and progress. However, fire was a common setback, as here in Bisbee, at left, going to glory, 1908.

MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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A rare engraving of mountain bison from H. R. Schoolcraft's Indian Tribes of the United States *(1860).*

The Mountain Bison

FEW ANIMALS HAVE CAPTURED the imagination as have the buffalo. The image of Plains Indians in colorful trappings riding on horseback into prodigious herds of buffalo has created an aura of romance and mythology. This association of horse, Indian, and buffalo—historically brief, culturally and economically unique—has almost completely shrouded many significant historical features of the bison in the prehorse era.

For example, it is misleading to think of this species as living only on the plains. Zoologists recognize two subspecies, or races, of bison. The plains buffalo *(Bison bison bison)* is well known. The other, the mountain bison *(Bison bison athabascae),* has received little attention, and consequently its habits and attributes have been largely ignored. The mountain bison lived in the forests and mountains, particularly the Rocky Mountains, of the United States. In Canada, where it is called the wood bison, it lived in the meadows and forests of the subarctic zone. Early nineteenth-century trappers recognized a difference in species and referred specifically to the "mountain bison." In the language of science, the generic name *Bison* was in the process of being accepted and was picked up in the vernacular of the mountain man. One wonders which of the many naturalists to travel to the Rockies in this period mentioned that the animal was not a true buffalo but a bison. After about 1845, buffalo replaces "bison" in most accounts, and "wood buffalo" also creeps in.

Studying the mountain bison raises several major questions: (1) How was the behavior and ecology of the mountain form different from the plains type? (2) What was the original distribution of this race? (3) Why was it extinct over much of its range at contact time?

FROM THE PLETHORA of literature in western history, the general characteristics of the mountain bison are slowly emerging. Its most significant attributes were: altitudinal migrations; extreme shyness, manifested by a tendency to escape into forests or other topography unsuitable for pur-

suing horsemen; agility and speed; dark pelage with longer, finer hair than the plains buffalo; and a tendency to congregate in small bands. The contemporary descriptions are consistent except for gross size. Here are some samples:

"In various portions of the Rocky Mountains, especially in the region of the parks, is found an animal which old mountaineers call the 'bison.' This animal bears about the same relation to the plains buffalo as a sturdy mountain pony does to a well-built American horse. His body is lighter, whilst his legs are shorter, but much thicker and stronger, than the plains animal, thus enabling him to perform feats of climbing and tumbling almost incredible in such a huge and apparently unwieldly beast.

"These animals are by no means plentiful, and are moreover excessively shy, inhabiting the deepest, darkest defiles, or the craggy, almost precipitous, sides of mountains, inaccessible to any but the most practised mountaineers." (R. I. Dodge: *The Plains of the Great West,* 1877) ". . . The buffalo on the Pacific side of the Rocky Mountains are fleeter and more active than those on the Atlantic side. . . ." (Washington Irving: *Adventures of Captain Bonneville,* 1835) "They were frequently described to me as a marked variety known to the hunters as *Mountain* buffalo, and quite unlike the buffalo of the plains, smaller in size, the hair longer, more shaggy, and blacker, with other well marked differences." (W. H. Brewer: *Animal Life in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado,* 1871)

A Lt. Grover, following the Blackfoot River in the winter of 1854, reported, "We crossed the track of a wood buffalo; his stride, when walking, was about a yard. This animal differs from the buffalo of the plains in being much larger, wilder, and in preferring a wooded to a prairie country." (Lt. C. Grover: *Pacific Railroad Report,* 1855)

The mountain bison wintered in the valleys, "holes," and "parks" in the Rockies. As the snow melted, they moved into the mountain meadows, even to the alpine tundra above the tree line. Recently, bones of a small band of bison (race not yet determined), including calves, were found under a melting ice sheet above the timberline on the Beartooth Plateau, northeast of Yellowstone National Park. They rutted in late summer, well isolated from the plains buffalo. This altitudinal migration seems to be one of the most distinguishing features of this subspecies. The paucity of records in many areas of the Rockies is due to season of observation and route of travel. For this reason, historians have frequently misinterpreted the status of bison in these regions. Travelers in the West stayed close to the rivers and easy passes, which offered water, firewood, meadows for grazing, and beaver for trapping. They generally wintered in well-protected valleys, especially in southern Idaho and northern Utah (winter bison hunts were common from Cache Valley, Utah, to the Snake River plains). In summer trappers were busy at the rendezvous, getting ready for the fall trapping season, and few climbed the mountains where bison grazed.

Lewis and Clark, the first explorers to penetrate the Rocky Mountain range of the mountain bison, followed the river valleys in western Montana and saw no live bison west of the "Gates of the Mountains." But they saw bison bones and traveled on bison trails, noting that ". . . it seems those animals do sometimes penetrate to a short distance within the mountains." (E. Coues: *History of the Expedition under the Command of Lewis and Clark,* 1893) The same interpretation is commonly made by others, and by implication does not recognize the mountain race. Significantly, Lewis and Clark's journey through these mountain valleys took place in the summer months.

In contrast, there were numerous records of bison kept by the men who traveled during the winter or at higher elevations. In the winter of 1831–32, John Work noted in his journal the existence of many herds of bison in the Beaverhead and Big Hole valleys and along the upper Salmon River. These areas overlap in part the routes of Lewis and Clark.

Frémont traveled up the Blue River from Middle Park, Colorado, in June, 1844. Approaching Hoosier Pass (11,541 feet), "we surprised a herd of buffalo, enjoying the shade at a small lake among the pines, and they made the dry branches crack, as they broke through the woods," he stated in his *Report* of 1844. Throughout his travel from North Park down to the area west of Pike's Peak, bison trails were abundant.

The ethnologist and anthropologist George Bird Grinnell claimed: "I have frequently seen living bison at and above timberline, and have found their remains well above timberline in Montana and in Wyoming. The bison commonly ranged in and occupied the mountains, and even the high mountains, all through the year. Old hunters of the west recognized a difference between the buffalo that lived in the mountains and those down on the plains."

By GENE M. CHRISTMAN

HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS, combined with zoological and anthropological data, indicate the range of mountain bison at contact time to have been as shown on the accompanying map. Because of the numbers involved and the habits of the animal, this area represents approximately the core, or

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permanent, ranges of the race in the United States. It can be described as the area where summer migration to mountainous regions occurred.

The extent of the distribution of bison west of the core ranges has been the subject of much discussion, but there has been no thorough examination of available information. The map represents only a preliminary plotting of this information and hence is incomplete. Because subspecific identification of so few specimens has been made, we cannot state that only the mountain form is represented in the West. Also, these records are late—the last thousand years or so. Extinct species of bison are not included.

In addition to the vast literature of western exploration, ethnological and archaeological sources are significant in reconstructing the history of the mountain bison. The distinction between "prehistoric" and "historic" is often unclear and of little value. Before the coming of explorers, trappers, and traders, however, two potent factors profoundly altered Indian economy and way of life: European diseases and the horse. These factors are clearly "historical" in timing.

Salvage archaeology in eastern Washington has unearthed extensive collections of bison bones in village sites. Both bison and pronghorn antelope, unknown in Washington in modern times, were abundantly represented in levels before the advent of the horse. The great weight of bison and the absence of horses for transporting them indicate that the kill site was in close proximity to the villages; bison killed farther away would not likely be represented in the village, for the meat was dried at the kill site and few or no bones carried back. The number of sites represented suggests more than a rare or sporadic occurrence of bison in the area. Furthermore, the presence of bones of fetal and immature calves argues for a breeding population. For reasons explained below, fewer bison bones are found at levels where horse bones are also present.

The records from Malheur and Harney lakes, Oregon, are "historic," for Indians interviewed there claim that after the bison were gone, they used tules as building materials for houses in place of hides.

Some evidence has been found to substantiate the existence of bison in California. Although no intact specimens are extant, there is much ethnographic information about Indians hunting bison on tribal areas in the northeastern portion of the state. The year 1830 has been suggested as the last occurrence of bison there. Indians in the Sierra Nevada received bison robes by trade from Washoe and eastern Mono Indians of the eastern foothills of that range. Horn tips found at Buena Vista Lake, California, are probably such trade items.

The Columbian Plateau and the northern Great Basin should be considered as marginal range; areas to the south were submarginal. A marginal range was an area with little or no access to high mountain meadows and tundra. Bison could in part maintain themselves in modest numbers, overflowing from the core area. Their populations must have fluctuated, for in good years they would increase by reproduction, as suggested by the Washington excavations. In drought years they would have been restricted to well-watered areas and thus would have been vulnerable to hunters. It is doubtful, however, that hunting drastically altered the population levels in prehorse days.

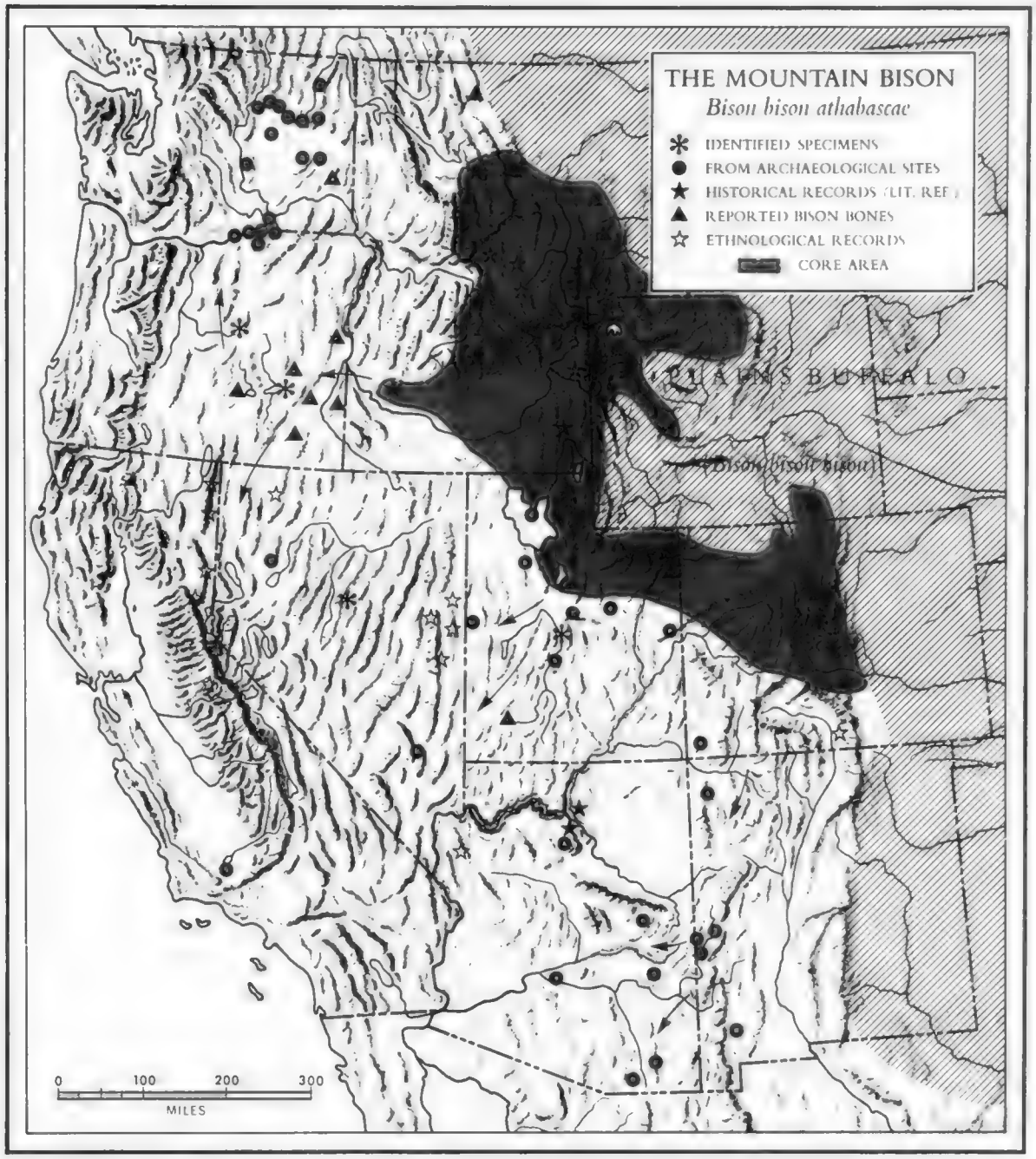
The bison records in southwestern Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico are unclear. They date from 500 to 1400 A.D., and half of them are from forested, mountainous areas. An intriguing record is that of F. Garces who traveled through the Hopi region and the lower reaches of the Little Colorado River in the early summer of 1776. The Indians fed his party from a recently killed "Cibola," a term the Spanish applied to bison in the Southwest. Two such situations indicate that bison were in the area and were killed by Indians.

Thus, there clearly is no substance to the myth that bison moved into the West at a very late date, perhaps after the horse moved north. It is evident that they not only had a broad distribution in the West but were present in the Great Basin and Columbia Plateau immediately before the arrival of white men. We might then ask, why the late demise of bison? I can suggest only one change, which can explain this extinction: a faunal and cultural addition—the horse.

In prehorse days, Indians killed bison by stampeding them over cliffs or shooting them with arrows. The former method was probably the most remunerative. Arrows were effective only at relatively close distances, and bison were difficult to approach.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Mountain bison in Yellowstone country. The photo, taken before 1894, depicts the Alum Creek Thermal area.



This map covers the range of the mountain bison in the western area of the United States.

It is doubtful that many North American Indians, if any, relied upon bison as a staple before the introduction of the horse. The Indians were not mobile enough, nor are "jumps" (cliffs) that convenient; so bison were a sometime supplement at best. The horse altered this, for the shooting distance was reduced to several feet; and the added mobility of scouts and villages, plus their newly acquired capacity to carry meat, significantly extended the Indians' hunting range.

Francis Haines pointed out (in the November, 1967, issue of THE AMERICAN WEST) that by 1720 the Nez Percé and Cayuse tribes of northern Idaho and southeastern Washington had acquired horses from the Shoshone Indians. By the end of the century these sedentary fishing folk had altered their economy and culture. They had become dependent upon plains buffalo for food and trade, and had picked up many other aspects of the Plains Indian culture. Their increased killing efficiency and greater mobility spelled doom to the bison populations on the Columbian Plateau, and forced Indian hunters to seek out the plains buffalo to maintain their altered culture.

Thus, for at least seventy-five years before the arrival of white men, horse-Indians were hunting bison in the Far West. Either by direct killing or by restricting movements of small herds from the core range, the horse-Indians eliminated the bison over a large area; today the only surviving mountain bison in the western United States are in Yellowstone National Park, and even these have been genetically diluted by contact with plains buffalo.

Gene M. Christman *is a zoologist and staff illustrator with the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley. His research interests in the West are from the viewpoint of a "historical geographer."*

XUM

A Matter of Opinion

Exploitation of the American Frontier

The following is excerpted from an article that appeared in the American Historical Association Newsletter (November, 1970): "Frontiersmen, Fur Traders, and Other Varmints, An Ecological Appraisal of the Frontier in American History," by Wilbur R. Jacobs.

The destruction of our natural environment is usually viewed as a great *modern* problem, the implication being that only in the twentieth century has the onslaught taken place. There is a growing realization, however, that from the beginning of our history we Americans have been both destructive and wasteful of natural resources. It is actually the scale of the damage instead of its newness which forces us, though still reluctantly, to confront the problem today.

We historians bear some responsibility for the lateness of our awakening, for we really have not done our homework. We have avoided and in most cases ignored the complicated series of historical phenomena that brought about our dilemma. The result is that our histories, particularly our frontier-sectional or "western" histories, tend to give us a glowing get-rich-quick chronicle of the conquest of the continent. For example, Frederick Jackson Turner described his theory of "progress" in an influential essay in 1893: ". . . the Indian trade pioneered the way for civilization . . . the trails widened into roads, and the roads into turnpikes, and these in turn were transformed into railroads. . . . In this progress from savage conditions lie topics for the evolutionist."

Our view of progress—one which permeates all groups of society and leads us to accept without question the need for an expanding economy—is that progress consists of exploitation and growth, which in turn depends upon commercialization and the conquest of nature. In our histories we have treated the land more as a commodity than as a resource. We have here in a nutshell the conquistador mentality that has so long dominated the writing of much American history.

Another example of misinterpretation is that western historians have overlooked the utterly destructive impact that the fur trade had upon the North American continent and the American Indian. There are no investigations of the role the fur men played in killing off certain types of wildlife, which in turn had a permanent effect upon the land and its inhabitants. The fur traders are usually depicted as positive benefactors in the development of American civilization. Indeed, the story of the fur trade is almost always (and perhaps unconsciously) told with a capitalistic bias. If the fur trade contributed to the rapid economic growth of the country, and it unquestionably did, then the implication is that the fur trade was a good thing for all Americans.

How can historians assess the damage caused by allowing commercial interests to override our best national interests? We might begin by analyzing the effects of the substitution within a half century of thousands of horses and domestic cattle for wild hoofed animals that existed in the huge area of the Louisiana Purchase. What effect did this have on the fertility of the land and the balance of nature? Can we historians join scientists in calling attention to the important principle that the earth's productivity depends upon an organic cycle, an order of nature in which organic material taken from the earth must be returned to it? The violation of this principle by Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was responsible for the destruction of a great virgin wilderness. In this destruction the substitution of annual grasses for the life-sustaining primordial prairie sod of middle America is one of the more momentous happenings in American history, but the subject is something less than a favorite with historians of the frontier.

Those who hope to write about these significant historic events will need an understanding not ordinarily possessed by historians. To study the impact the fur trade had upon America, for instance, we must have more than a beginning acquaintance with ethnology, botany, silviculture, biology, zoology, and indeed much of the physical sciences. Our doctoral programs for budding American historians need drastic revision if we hope to train qualified candidates who can write intelligently about the history of the exploitation of the land.

Francis Parkman, perhaps our greatest historian, trained himself to write about the Indian, the American forest, and early American civilization. Originally a professor of horticulture, he understood and loved the American forest; he understood, therefore, the respect for nature among the Indians. He is a rare example of a historian who took the trouble to educate himself so that he could "manage to tell things as they really happened."

The attempt to preserve the wilderness resources left to us surely deserves the attention and support of all historians.

This page, A MATTER OF OPINION, *is provided as an open forum. Contributions are invited, but should be limited to 750 words and must be signed.*

Angle of Repose

REVIEWED BY T. H. WATKINS

EDITOR'S NOTE: THE AMERICAN WEST *rarely reviews works of fiction, primarily because ours is a magazine of history. However, there comes a time when it appears expedient to break with tradition, and with this issue we are exercising that prerogative.*

And, coincidentally, it happens that two important novels came upon the scene almost simultaneously, and both are being reviewed. One, Angle of Repose, *is written by noted historian and former editor-in-chief of* THE AMERICAN WEST, *Wallace Stegner. The second,* Arfive, *is also written by a giant among western writers, A. B. Guthrie, Jr.*

Angle of Repose, a novel by Wallace Stegner *(Doubleday & Company, New York, 1971; 569 pp., $7.95).*

IN ATTEMPTING to understand both the fact and the meaning of our western history, we must turn to many tools. It is not enough to rely alone on the arid statistics of records and reports, however fulsome, on the entries of contemporary journals and diaries, however detailed, on the observations of newspaper reporters, however descriptive, or even on the interpretations of historians, however perceptive.

The process of understanding our past —as opposed to merely knowing about it—can be a literary exercise as much as anything else, for it depends upon comprehending not only the actions, but the motivations and feelings of living people caught up in history; only an act of creative imagination can properly delineate that depth of human experience.

Fiction—rarely, but truly—has a place in all this. In the hands of a craftsman, it can achieve the value of time encapsulated, as in Kenneth Roberts's *Northwest Passage;* in the hands of an artist, it can achieve literature, as in William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner.* In either case, it has the singular value of enlarging our understanding.

Unfortunately, the West has not received its share of such efforts, and that is why the publication of Wallace Stegner's *Angle of Repose* is an event of such significance. Stegner is both historian and novelist, craftsman and artist; he not only *knows about* our western history, having studied it and interpreted it in some of the most valuable works of nonfiction in our literature, he *understands* it, having lived a portion of the frontier experience and re-created it many times within the framework of fiction. In *Angle of Repose,* the combination has produced what has already been called his "masterwork"; however suspicious one may be of superlatives, one would not care to argue with the description. Certainly, it is his best novel since *The Big Rock Candy Mountain.*

The narrator of the book is Lyman Ward, a historian driven into retirement by age and a bone disease that has wasted one of his legs and frozen his neck to immobility. Confined to a wheelchair and in constant pain, he lives alone in the house of his grandparents, Oliver

Novelist Wallace Stegner

and Susan Ward, in the old mining town of Grass Valley, obsessed with an enterprise that may be his last: the investigation and articulation of their lives, a task he hopes will lead him to his "angle of repose," an engineering term that defines the angle at which loose earth lies at rest. To discover it, he enters the past of his grandparents, gently at first, then more and more deeply as time passes.

What emerges is an intricate and faithfully-rendered mosaic of two lives played out against a backdrop of western history. It begins in hope in 1876 with a transcontinental journey to the quicksilver mines of New Almaden, California, and ends in despair in 1890 with failure on the barren desert stretches of the Snake River plains of Idaho.

The narrative is dominated by the presence of Susan Ward (and is based in part on the life and writings of Mary Halleck Foote), an eastern artist and writer who has followed her husband—nervously but bravely—into a West she conceives (sometimes quite rightly) as being but little removed from the days of Lewis and Clark. Her reactions to the quality of life in the West provide an illuminating emotional focus, a touchstone on which Stegner builds a fabric of experience that is as personal to the reader as it is to Susan Ward—a true suspension of disbelief, the primary goal of all fiction.

In its grasp of time and place and movement, the story is an exhibition of a craftsman's skill. Dialogue, sights, sounds, smells—all the details of verisimilitude—ring true, with no taint of strain or affectation. New Almaden, Stegner writes, "had the air of having been dumped down the hillside—steep streets, houses at every angle white and incongruous or unpainted and shabby. Wash hung everywhere, the vacant lots were littered with cans and trash, dogs prowled and children screamed."

Leadville, he relates, "made its appearance as a long gulch (Evans) littered with wreckage, shacks, and mine tailings. It was rutted deep by ore wagons, scalped of its timber. The smoke of smelters and charcoal kilns smudged a

(continued on page 64)

Exploring unusual aspects of American history

PEYOTE *An account of the origins and growth of the peyote religion*

Alice Marriott and Carol K. Rachlin

While the white man debates hallucinogens in headlines and legislatures, "the authors of *American Indian Mythology,* both Oklahoma anthropologists, have written a soft and warm book about . . . peyote, which is widely used in religious ceremonies by...Zuñis, Comanches, Taos, Pueblos and others. . . . An affecting blend of scientific objectivity and personal sympathy," says *Publishers' Weekly.* The authors also describe the effects of peyote on themselves, and its influence on Indian art and culture. Index Bibliography $6.95

HORSES IN AMERICA

Francis Haines

The author, whose *The Buffalo* won universal praise, tells the extraordinary role of the horse in the exploration, settling, growth, and development of the United States. His book is packed with unusual detail and little-known anecdotes about horsemen, including the cowboy, who, Mr. Haines observes, "could be a cowboy without a cow, but not without a horse." Illustrated $7.95

Thomas Y. Crowell Company
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Arfive REVIEWED BY FEROL EGAN

Arfive, a novel by A. B. Guthrie, Jr. *(Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1970; 278 pp., $5.95).*

THE ART OF THE NOVEL is alive and kicking on the eastern apron of the Rocky Mountains. Here in the setting of his penetrating study of the clash between the dying frontier and the coming of civilization at the turn of the century is where Guthrie returns each summer to renew his roots with the land of his youth. And all of the past is here in this tight, beautifully constructed story where each word, each sentence, each shift in point-of-view performs like a champion cutting horse. For Guthrie is a master novelist in a day when overwriting and just plain ignorance of the craft are merchandised as novels.

The title comes from the cattle brand R5, and it is a hot iron that burns in a reader's memory long after he has read the book. At one level, this is a story of the difference between Benton Collingsworth—schoolteacher, moralist, and stiff-necked Victorian who is out of place on the High Plains—and Mort Ewing—old time cattleman, a man willing to accept others without trying to bind them to his way of life, and a frontiersman who watches changes he really doesn't like but who recognizes that change is inevitable.

At another level, *Arfive* is the story of how wind and endless space in the Big Sky Country crush the spirit of women who look out their windows and know that only distance will be there day after day, year after year, until the wind has taken away the softness of their beauty and given them hardness and old age in exchange. Level after level, the story unfolds, and out of his prismatic approach, Guthrie interweaves his characters, the land, the weather, and the winds of change. Yet, one of the major themes running throughout the novel is the clash between that which is natural and that which is unnatural.

Benton Collingsworth is unnatural to the land while Mort Ewing is as natural as the vanished buffalo herds. The tragic love affair between the lesbian schoolteacher, Miss Carson, and the frightened Indian girl, Maria Wolf, is a pairing of the unnatural and the natural. The homesteaders who come to plow the grazing land represent an unnatural approach to the nature of the country. The introduction of the automobile to a country of horses, the control of a weak sheriff by an evil but shrewd deputy—all of these elements are the conflict of the natural and the unnatural. Finally, even the marriage of Mort Ewing and Juliet Justice, who is young enough to be his daughter, is an unnatural marriage that takes place for natural enough reasons.

Arfive is an altogether different kind of novel than *The Big Sky, The Way West,* and *These Thousand Hills.* For these novels covered a wide canvas with the colors and shapes of the frontier American West, while *Arfive* is a masterpiece of human understanding, a philosophical examination of all the frailties and all the strengths that make or break man and his institutions.

Ferol Egan *is an associate editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

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Fort Supply: Indian Territory by Robert C. Carriker *(University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1970; 241 pp., illus., maps, biblio., index, $7.95).*

REVIEWED BY D. J. HERDA

ONCE LONG AGO, while observing the tricks Natty Bumppo used to ply his trade (tracking the Indians who were very often tracking him, stopping along the way only long enough to bury a scalped settler or two), I fell in love with the Old West. But I soon wearied of Bumppo and his tireless cunning, and of James Fenimore Cooper's stiflingly romantic style and coincidentally absurd plotting. It was then I turned to an author such as Robert C. Carriker.

For, while the incidents and quotes Carriker weaves into his documentary of Fort Supply are pulled right from the aura of Cooper, he never loses sight of the fact that he's writing a documentary.

Camp Supply was founded on November 18, 1868, at Wolf Creek near Beaver River in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) and stood as sort of a "dispatching house" from which soldiers journeying into the wilds received food, water, and other staples. At first, it consisted of stockades to check surprise attacks, a blockhouse, a storehouse, several crude wells, and "comfortable quarters," made up of pits. Building crews laughingly referred to the name Camp Supply as a "misnomer, for while there was a partial supply of everything, there was not an adequate supply of anything."

But, while Camp Supply furnished the butt to its own men's jokes, it soon grew to become a stalwart depot in a hostile land where, more often than not, "good Indian relations" were as meaningful as the Indians themselves were reliable.

"The younger men of the Cheyenne," wrote Col. Anderson D. Nelson of Camp Supply, "exhibit occasionally little impertinencies and insolence which indicates anything rather than a friendly footing and . . . I am now constantly on the alert for the uneasiness manifested in the Cheyenne camp and a mere spark may . . . set this whole region ablaze."

But Indians weren't *all* Camp Supply had to face. "Whisky ranchers," poachers, and cattle thieves more than once set the territory reeling. Reading more like a page from a modern-day TV script than historical Americana, Carriker describes the reaction of the normally peaceful Cheyennes:

"More and more the unpledged Cheyennes ran off Miles's agency stock and refused to give it up. The Indians moved their camps far off the reservation to the Sweetwater River in Texas. The problems of low rations, whisky merchants, buffalo hunters, and horse thieves—now reportedly scalping victims to make the murders appear to be the work of Indians—made the Cheyennes even angrier.

"Several Cheyenne leaders, including Grey Beard and Medicine Water, eventually joined the hostiles. A combined Cheyenne, Comanche, and Kiowa force numbering nearly three hundred attacked Adobe Walls on the Canadian River on June 27. Twenty-eight buffalo hunters and one woman were trapped in the station for a full day although miraculously they repulsed each wave of attackers."

Camp Supply, for ten years a "temporary outpost," which many military officials wanted closed, gained official fort status in December 1878, when the secretary of war, "with rare foresight . . . suggested in his 1879 report that . . . the future value of such a post would be to 'maintain the Indians in possession of their lands and to protect them against broils and difficulties with the whites, both respectable persons and outlaws.' "

The secretary's belief in the necessity of maintaining Fort Supply was not ill-founded. The fort regularly dispensed food to the Cheyennes, Pawnees, and Arapahoes, who during the long, lean winters grew so hungry that "they readily ate dead horseflesh. Pawnee hunters encountered Sergeant Storr of Fort Supply while he was hunting, stole his game, and then fried skunk meat in his frying pan. A week later the Indians shot a civilian, having mistaken him, they said, for a big turkey."

Fort Supply remained active until February 26, 1895, when notification from army headquarters turned it over to the Department of the Interior. Carriker chronicles all those years with the skill of a military strategist—his writing style sharp and lean, his lavish footnotes and bibliographical references enough to satisfy the most demanding historical researcher.

D. J. Herda *of Chicago, Illinois, is assistant editor of* Elks Magazine.

"It restores my faith in the novel as a major form of literary art."
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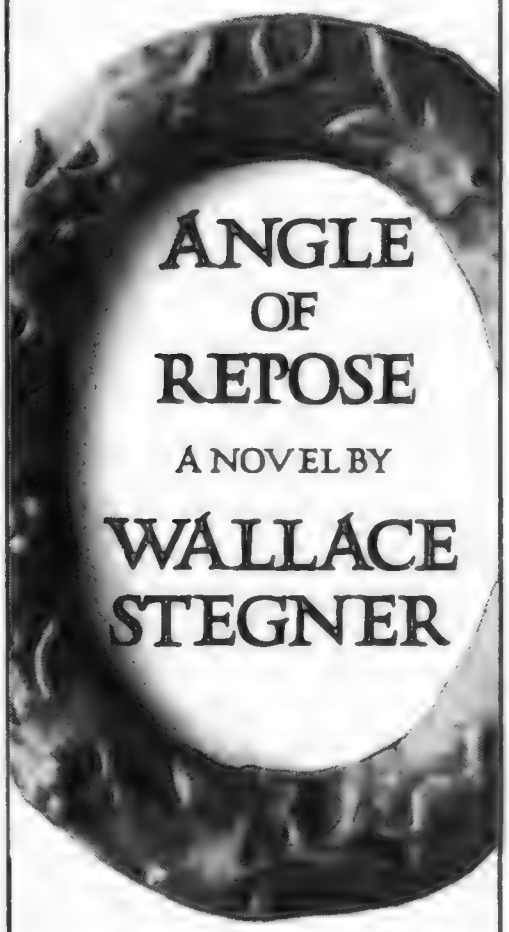

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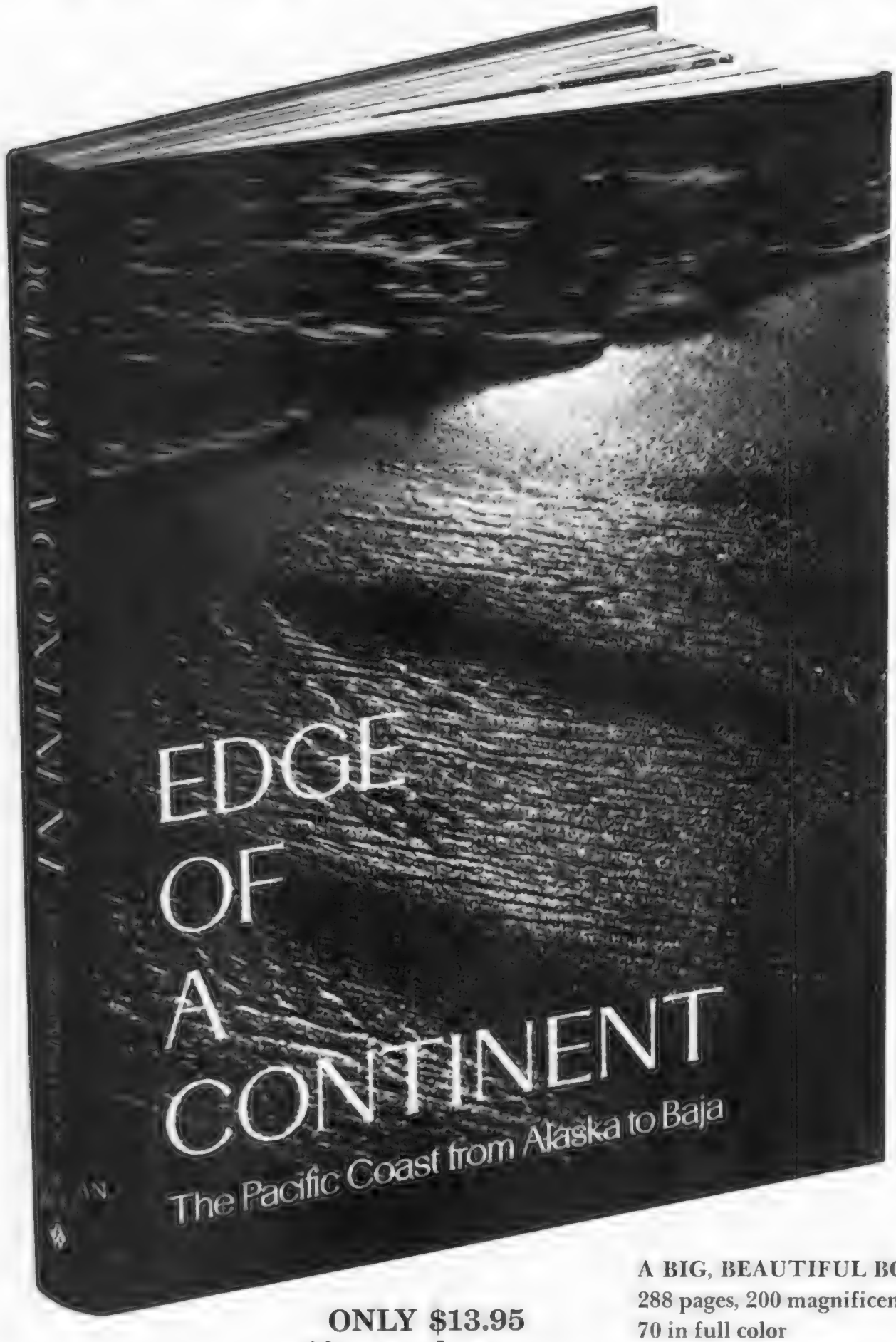

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What sea bird flies in hunting formations—as large as twenty-five miles across—which consist of up to 250,000 birds?

Who first discovered that California is not an island?

Why did animals travel both east and west across the Bering Strait ages ago?

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To what portion of its original size has man reduced San Francisco Bay since the gold rush?

What tree bark was used for weaving clothes, baskets, tablecloths, mattresses, even canoe sails?

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Although filled with such information, this book is as absorbing as a novel.

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Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio by George Catlin, introduction by Harold McCracken *(Swallow Press, Chicago, 1970; lithographs with notes, 16" x 20" limited edition reprint of 1844 portfolio, $100.00).*

REVIEWED BY DONALD E. BOWER

GEORGE CATLIN'S stated purpose in his artistic endeavors was "to paint the splendid panorama of a world entirely different from anything seen or painted before," to portray this primitive and vast wilderness "where men are all red . . . where no laws but those of honor are known . . . [a land] uncorrupted by the vices of civilized acquaintance. . . . It is for these uncontaminated people that I would be willing to devote the energies of my life."

To peruse the twenty-five full-size reproductions (16" x 20") included in *Catlin's North American Indian Portfolio* is to tour the early "Great Far West" as an insider, to see the Indian world as few men—either in the 1830s, when Catlin painted them, or today—have observed them. Catlin not only loved the red men; he trusted them implicitly at a time when violence was rife between the white and red peoples; and he decried the ultimate extinction he saw as the Indian's fate. As he wrote in the Preface to the original volume of his portfolio, "I started out in the year 1832 . . . inspired with an enthusiastic hope and reliance that I could meet and overcome all the hazards and privations of a life devoted to the production of a literal and graphic delineation of the living manners, customs, and character of an interesting race of people, who are rapidly passing away from the face of the Earth; lending a hand to a dying nation, who have no historians or biographers of their own, to pourtray [*sic*] with fidelity their native looks and history; thus snatching from approaching oblivion what could be saved for the benefit of posterity, and perpetuating it as a just monument to the memory of a truly lofty and noble race."

Catlin's significance in portraying the life of the early West has been underrated, obscured because he painted the Indian, honestly and sympathetically, as he existed, at a time when it was more popular to consider the red men as savages—a brief step removed from apemen of the Stone Age. Perhaps, with the reissuance of this portfolio at a time when the importance of America's first citizens is being more fully recognized, George Catlin will achieve his rightful place in history.

Adding greatly to both the interest and the understanding of the paintings are Catlin's own comprehensive notes concerning each of the works. More than a commentary, his descriptions become a capsulized history of the life and mores of the American Indian, written by a man of perception and compassion. "I love a people," he said, "who have always made me welcome to the best they had . . . who are honest without laws, who have no jails and no poorhouses . . . who are free from religious animosities . . . who never fought a battle with white men except on their own ground . . . and oh how I love a people who don't live for the love of money."

Catlin's *Portfolio* is a giant work in giant-size format. An admirable publishing feat, it is a volume to cherish and one that will add to our understanding of the Indian West.

Donald E. Bower *is editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

Visions of Glory: Texans on the Southwestern Frontier by Stephen B. Oates *(University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1970; 217 pp., biblio., index, $6.95).*

REVIEWED BY JOE B. FRANTZ

THE REVISION of the story of Texas and the Southwest goes on apace, despite all the best efforts of the news magazines, *Esquire*, and *Harper's* to perpetuate the stereotypes. In this effort to look at Texans honestly no one has been more diligent and dispassionate than Stephen B. Oates, a periodic Texan expatriate who can assay that subcontinent's strengths and weaknesses without sentiment, without overcompensating, but with the understanding born of honest intimacy.

Oates's latest effort is a collection of previous articles and essays, now expanded over their original separate appearances. All contain fresh material. All also contain considerable suggestive material that should cause the serious scholar to reappraise some of his esti-

mates of the Lone Star. Oates works from sources to form opinions based on fact, not prejudices caused by exposure to a noxious minority dedicated to the Texan brag. He details, for instance, the unabashed racism of *"Los Diablos Tejanos!"* (the Texas Rangers), which first appeared in abbreviated, unfootnoted form in THE AMERICAN WEST. In their formative years the Rangers regarded Mexicans with the same unfeeling disdain that some Southern rednecks displayed toward Negroes—killing a Mexican simply was an incident, never to be classified as murder. So if in 1960–1970 the storied Rangers still observe a double standard of justice toward Mexican-Americans, they are merely being historically consistent.

Along the way, Oates gives one of the patron saints of the Western History Association, the late Walter Prescott Webb, a bit of inferential hell for his acceptance of Ranger racial attitudes. In Webb's defense it can be stated categorically that he had grown along with the nation and that he wanted to recast some of his earlier opinions. But death intervened before he could prove that some men do grow over the years.

No attempt is made here to provide a continuous narrative or analysis. Oates jumps from Schubert to Stravinsky, or if you prefer, Snively to Spindletop to Space (sounds like the old Cubs' double-play combination!), sampling and probing as he follows Texas forward. The result, as indicated, leaves a fast trail of high quality, smooth and facile, but always fundamental.

Joe B. Frantz *is director of the Texas State Historical Association and editor of the* Southwestern Historical Quarterly.

The Navajos: Past and Present of a Great People by John Upton Terrell *(Weybright & Talley, New York, 1970; 310 pp., biblio., index, $7.95).*

REVIEWED BY RICHARD H. DILLON

THIS BOOK is a good example of what is being produced today as the result of a quiet revolution in quality popular history that has been going on (non-violently) for some years now. Ever since the day of Bernard DeVoto, there seems to have been a sort of Gresham's law operative but, luckily, one that has been stuck in reverse gear.

As the novel has sunk into the ooze, the popular but factual study of man and his world has risen like a zeppelin. Bruce Catton, Joseph Wood Krutch, and a host of other talented writers have set the bounds of quality documentation and narration, and a surprisingly high percentage of writers of popular history aspire to these high standards, although not all of them make it. John Upton Terrell is a case in point.

Terrell's new book is not up there with DeVoto nor with the works of such contemporaries as Jonathan Daniels, Paul Horgan, or John Bakeless. Yet it is not just a hack job, pasted up hurriedly by cribbing from a handful of earlier works in the name of "research." It does not break new ground, it does not offer new insights, and the narrative style and synthesis are not as skilled as, say, that of Alan Moorehead.

But it is a worthwhile contribution for readers who want their books to be interesting as well as informative and who find even the most popular of the university press books—those of Oklahoma and Nebraska—a little too specialized or over-footnoted for their taste. To the newcomer to Navajo history, this book either will suffice as an introduction and survey, rolled into one, or will get him started on a reading program (based on Terrell's bibliography) that will take him to Clyde Kluckhohn, Ruth Underhill, Laura Gilpin, et al.

Books like *The Navajos* are also needed by an unsophisticated but inquiring readership that does not use rare book rooms in libraries or out-of-print bookshops, and does not peruse *Books in Print* to find out which works are still available even though they have been pushed out of the local bookstore by "this year's models."

The author covers the history of the Navajos, or *Dineh,* from the time they were forced into the Southwest six hundred years ago until the present, as they grapple with the traumatic options of integration, separation, or half-and-half. He suggests why such decisions are so difficult after a century of Yankee hauling and tugging, in which Indian agents and missionizing teachers have been almost as bad as the out-and-out crooks who have fleeced the Indians since Colón slopped ashore on the sands of Watling's Island. Mr. Terrell touches on

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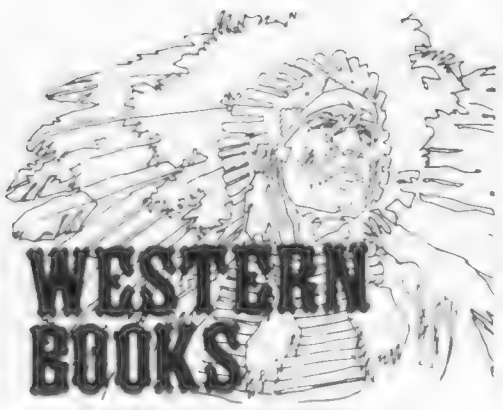

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the overpopulation by both men and animals on the marginal land of mesas and canyons of Navajodom, reminding us that the Navajos must fear themselves as well as outsiders in a rapidly shrinking ecological world.

The author's partisanship shows a little at first when he defends the brutal Navajo raids on settlements and sheepherders in the early nineteenth century by seeming to suggest that the countermeasures of Hopis, Pueblos, and Mexicans were just as aggressive. He offers no supporting evidence, and it is not likely there is any, even if we have underestimated the amount of slaving of Navajos and grossly underestimated the morale—and the amount of powder for clumsy *escopetas*—in the locked adobes of the Mexican-Navajo frontier.

One other complaint: the author only touches upon the remarkable story of Navajo arts and crafts. There should be more on the silverwork, the weaving, and even the paintings of this tribe.

But, by and large, this is a well-told account of a great people who, among all the tribes of America, perhaps, have most completely asserted themselves and seized the initiative from Anglo bureaucrats and do-gooders in order to decide their own future.

Richard H. Dillon *is head of the Sutro Library in San Francisco.*

Battle Drums and Geysers: The Life and Journals of Lt. Gustavus Cheney Doane, Soldier and Explorer of the Yellowstone and Snake River Regions by Orrin and Lorraine Bonney, foreword by George B. Hartzog, Jr. *(Swallow Press, Chicago, 1970; 622 pp., photographs, maps, index, $15.00).*

REVIEWED BY RICHARD BARTLETT

THIS IS A BOOK about a cavalry officer on the fading American frontier. Lieutenant Gustavus Cheney Doane joined the Army in 1862 and died on active duty with the rank of Captain in 1892; he was fifty-two years old. Some of his activities were of sufficient importance to be worth mentioning, but the sum total of his achievements is negligible. In truth, he was a glory-hunter who never made the grade.

Probably Doane's most notable accomplishment was a beautifully composed report of the so-called Langford-Washburn-Doane Expedition into the Upper Yellowstone in 1870. This was a distinct contribution to the knowledge of "Wonderland" and, as such, it deserves a niche in the story of the creation of the Yellowstone Park by Congress in 1872. Doane's most controversial exploit was his "Snake River Exploration," in which he led an expedition that endeavored to navigate that river from Heart Lake in Yellowstone Park to the Columbia, in the middle of the winter. In addition, the lieutenant was in the Yellowstone region several other times. He accompanied the secretary of war there in 1875 and was in the vicinity during the Nez Percé troubles in 1877. In the latter case, his actions—or inactions—may be subject to criticism. He was a participant in the Sioux campaign in 1876, and he saw service against the Apaches in Arizona. He also participated in an abortive Arctic exploration in 1880. He even tried to interest Washington in an expedition to find the sources of the Nile River. And he designed the Army's so-called Centennial tent.

Such a man was certainly a cut above the average. He left some papers, a few journals, and a dossier of his official career. It is on the basis of these, plus pertinent events of the world in which he lived, that any biography must be written and justified.

The volume is a compendium of all that is known of the mortal accomplishments of one Gustavus C. Doane; it is a collection of Doaneiana. The two journals that are reproduced are thoroughly researched and annotated. Yet one cannot refrain from suggesting that the format is amateurish and uninspired, that in the brief and awkwardly written biographical sketch, the lieutenant never emerges as a flesh-and-blood figure. A two-hundred page biography, synthesizing and quoting from the other materials, would have been more interesting, more interpretive, and would have placed Doane in a better light as to his place in history.

However, there is something to be said for compiling the journals and papers of a man in a single volume, and as an example of such treatment, this book is acceptable. The maps and illustrations are rare and interesting. As a collector's item, the book should do well.

Richard Bartlett *is a professor of history at Florida State University, Tallahassee.*

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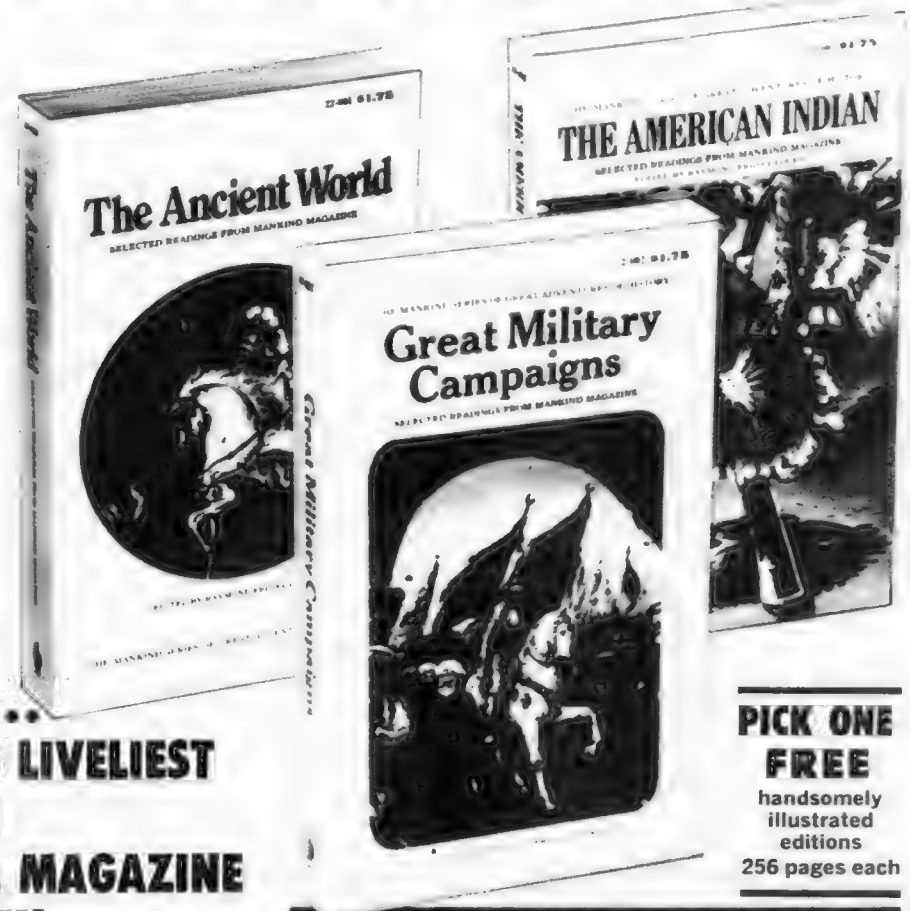

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The Heroic Triad: Essays in the Social Energies of Three Southwestern Cultures by Paul Horgan *(Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1970; 256 pp., maps, biblio., index, $7.95).*

REVIEWED BY DON GREAME KELLEY

FOR THE JOURNEYMAN and master of sail on the sea of history, Paul Horgan launched, in 1954, a splendid vessel christened *Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History* which deservedly won the Pulitzer and Bancroft prizes for history. This thousand-page epic of a region is surely remembered and treasured by a host of readers with the capacity to absorb the most compelling and evocative word depiction of time, place, event, and people in print.

In its course from the southern Rockies to the Gulf of Mexico, the Rio Grande is the lifeline of generations, the unbroken thread through centuries and landscapes which has bound together three successive ethnic waves and has, in its fashion, helped to fuse their respective strains and cultures into the greater community of the Rio Grande valley—primarily, in this context, New Mexico.

Indian, Latin, Anglo: each entered, in his appointed time, like a voice in a fugue. Each is still there, a distinct voice but blending in whatever harmonies and disharmonies exist in this southwestern state today. They are *The Heroic Triad.*

The timeliness of this spin-off volume (25 percent of the words of *Great River,* with a new prologue and closing words) lies in its addressing itself to a concern for people above events; for *who* we are over *what* we did—to the land or to each other; for a present viewed in the light of a past that reveals our growth, not merely our passage. The parent book stands divested of its chronicles—its *entradas,* battles, intrigues, and therefore of many of its actors by name, biography, and obituary. What remains is a living land and three living peoples. Thus Paul Horgan gives us once again three intricately and lovingly detailed portraits, which illuminate in turn three distinct peoples, each with its many-faceted culture, complex personality, and particular outlook on life. But more humanitarian and historian than sociologist, he does so by taking us with his triad through the time-context of each of its member types.

So we partake in their emergence, growth, change, and intermingling. We enter ancient pueblo time; we camp with Spanish soldiers, feast with hidalgos, pray with the padres; we trap and carouse with mountain men, take the Santa Fe Trail with traders' Conestogas, ride and sing with cowboys, homestead with settlers and their patient womenfolk. All is woven into the fabric of each people's character; conversely, history was shaped in large part of that fabric. Among the author's closing words are these:

"As in any historical projection, changes in the terms of social energy will continue to be the main theme of any observation of the Southwest. Meanwhile, those phases of change which occur only through aeons of geological time, affecting the landscape, with all its splendors of space, light, mountain, desert, river, canyon, high plains . . . will always know a larger scale and a slower pace than man's."

Don Greame Kelley *is an associate editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

Lure of the Land: A Social History of the Public Lands from the Articles of Confederation to the New Deal by Everett Dick *(University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1970; 413 pp., illus., biblio., index, $9.50).*

REVIEWED BY JERRY O'CALLAGHAN

EVERETT DICK defines "the lure of the land" as "the prospect of landownership" without the class qualifications of Europe's vestigial feudalism. He thus describes the "process of transfer to private ownership of government land" . . . as "the woof thread on the loom of the frontier."

Without markedly changing standard interpretations, Dick gives a wealth of illustrative detail on the operation of the United States' public land system from its inception in 1782 to the close of the frontier during the New Deal.

As he freely acknowledges, Dick relies on the standard treatments of Robbins, Hibbard, Gates, Peffer, and others. His original contribution covers government documents and manuscripts, contemporaneous writings, reminiscent

Continued on page 61

The Great Range Wars:

REVIEWED BY
COLONEL E. P. COSTELLO, U.S.A.F.

The Great Range Wars: Violence on the Grasslands by Harry Sinclair Drago *(Dodd, Mead, & Co., New York, 1970; 307 pp., intro., illus., biblio., notes, index, $7.50).*

AFTER NEARLY FIVE DECADES and more than a hundred books, Harry Sinclair Drago (or Will Ermine, the *nom de plume* that he uses from time to time) remains one of the most enduring names among those who write of the American West. His popularity with the vast audience of general readers who devour popular history and fiction of the West has increased with each passing year for at least three good reasons, all of which are demonstrated in Mr. Drago's latest work, *The Great Range Wars.*

First, Drago is an expert and knowledgeable synthesizer of source materials, both primary and secondary. This is significant to the general reader who is looking for a quickly perceived but accurate picture without the minutiae that delight most specialists. Second, Drago writes extremely well and sustains the excitement that is inherent in the stories that he tells, despite the fact that in the book under review the stories have all been told many times over. One inescapable conclusion that most readers will deduce from reading just a bit of Drago is that he is a born raconteur.

Third, and in some ways the most significant reason for Mr. Drago's popularity, is his revisionist approach to popular history. His revisionism is best demonstrated in his comments on many of the source materials. These comments tend toward destroying myths and pointing the way to a more accurate understanding of the material discussed.

An excellent illustration found in *The Great Range Wars* is Mr. Drago's attempt to put to rest the persistent myth of multitudinous and bloody sheep-cattle wars that, as fostered by the movies and western fiction, kept the range country in constant turmoil. The author restates with both reason and conviction his long held view that whatever cattlemen and sheepmen thought of one another, there were actually very few serious confrontations and only one that could possibly be called a range war, the Pleasant Valley War in Arizona.

Mr. Drago sets an ambitious goal in the introduction when, after noting the vast amount of material available on the range wars, he asks: ". . . could the story of range conflicts and rangemen, from Texas to Montana, including New Mexico and Arizona, be condensed into a single volume of average length?" The question is answered affirmatively in the three hundred–odd pages that follow.

The violence of the major struggles for range supremacy comes through clearly without resort to an overemphasis of the more venal aspects of the period, upon which some modern authors rely to ensure sales. With well-placed confidence Mr. Drago prefers to rely on his writing skill and his depth of knowledge, both of which were acquired during his nearly fifty years of studying and writing on the West. The Drago devotee will not be disappointed nor will any casual reader to whom the subject matter appeals.

The Great Range Wars covers, successively, the establishment of the cattle industry in the Southwest, from the driving of the Comanches from the Palo Duro Canyon through the apex of Goodnight and Chisum and on to the Pleasant Valley War in Arizona. The Lincoln County War and the fencing of the Texas panhandle are covered in considerable detail. Then on to Montana and thence to the Johnson County War of Wyoming. Throughout there are constant reminders of the cowmen as pioneers and tamers of a wild land. At the same time we are reminded that the Indian resisters were not necessarily wild, bloodthirsty savages but could be considered as patriots defending their homeland and way of life. Some attention is also given to the fact that the Negro played an often crucial role in the building of the early cattle empires.

There are repetitions in the text, but they are only a minor irritation. In fact, this reviewer tends toward excusing these repetitions as redundancies for emphasis. A criticism of greater significance is the placement of the footnotes at the end of the text. Recognizing that the proper placement of footnotes is an insoluble question that is cussed and discussed interminably, suffice it to record my opinion that since many of Mr. Drago's most pertinent comments and "gap fillers" are contained in the footnotes, the footnoting should have been done at the bottom of the page to which the note pertained. I think that ready reader access to substantive footnotes such as Mr. Drago uses in this book is an absolute must. The only cogent reason that I can think of for placing footnotes behind the text is in deference to the printer—certainly not to the reader.

Mr. Drago sets his goal of synthesis for the general reader in the introduction, and in my judgment he meets it fully. Both the general reader and the aficionado will find much to be happy about in reading this book. The synthesis is superlative, the writing is in an easy, readable style, and the opinions are knowledgeable.

Some excellent photographs, a bibliography, and a comprehensive index add to the value of the book.

Colonel E. P. Costello *of the U.S. Air Force in San Francisco, is also a college instructor.*

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Indian America: The Black Hawk War by Miriam Gurko *(Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1970; illus., $4.50).*

REVIEWED BY JON C. BOWER

IN THE OVERALL course of western history, the war to subdue Black Hawk and his renegade band of Sac and Fox Indians was but a slight incident. Compared to the vast campaigns waged against the Sioux of the plains and the Apache of the desert, it was a mere drop in the blood bath which some like to call the westward expansion of this young nation.

In her book *Indian America: The Black Hawk War,* Miriam Gurko unfolds the events of this unfortunate chapter of American history. She does so simply and with such quiet feeling that the reader is once again brought painfully aware of the agony that an impatient young nation can inflict upon the innocent who might stand in the way of its progress.

The Black Hawk War was really no more than a thorn in the side of the United States government, but it was an embarrassing thorn. Like the valiant exodus of Chief Joseph and his Nez Percés, or the hardship-ridden homeward march of the Cheyenne which would occur later, Black Hawk's stand against the military might of a nation proved that spirit could overcome almost insurmountable odds.

Black Hawk, a chief of the Sac nation, had fought alongside Tecumseh of the Shawnee during the War of 1812. The Indians had come to know only hardship and treachery at the hands of the American frontiersmen. It was for this reason that they allied themselves with the British in that war. When the British lost, the Indians suffered miserably. There were those among the victorious Americans who maintained that the Indians were a vanquished nation and their lands should be taken.

However, it was not the policy of the government to be so callous. The government simply "bought" the Indian lands with promises of annuities and money. In so doing, the United States established a precedent for dealing with the tribes which would be the source of constant distrust and hatred on both sides. It would finally be one of the contributing factors in the downfall of the Indian way of life.

It was to just such legal chicanery that Black Hawk fell victim. Promised that if he would sign the treaty, he would suffer no retribution for his part in the War of 1812, Black Hawk made his X on the paper which he neither understood nor trusted. The paper which he signed, along with other Sac and Fox chieftains, sold to the United States their beloved island homeland Saukenuk. In speaking of it later Black Hawk said, "They — the whites — might buy our bodies for dissection, and we would touch the goose quill to confirm it, without knowing what we were doing."

In the ensuing battle, Black Hawk tried to surrender but his flag of truce was ignored by the ruffian volunteers and the flag bearers put to death. Angered, Black Hawk accidentally won the first battle of the war. It was really only a minor victory.

Heartened by this victory, Black Hawk went ahead with his war. Before he was finally defeated and captured, he would try vainly to surrender three more times. Each time fate would thwart his attempt.

The author tells simply and with feeling a short and relatively unimportant incident in the multitude of campaigns which would later be called the Indian Wars. Her fine book serves to point out the sad course that destiny took when a nation too anxious to reason and too proud to consider pursued a pell-mell policy of annihilation. When a small amount of consideration could have probably averted much if not all of the Indian wars, haste and greed were the order of the day.

History does not smile upon our treatment of the Indian. *The Black Hawk War* shows this. Duplicity and deceit were the watchwords of Indian policy. It is sad to note that those watchwords have not changed greatly in many cases. It is as Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé wrote in his later life, "Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other, then we shall have no more wars. We shall all be alike . . . with one sky above us and one country around us, and one government for all. For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying."

Jon C. Bower *of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, is a folksinger and writer of western history.*

LURE OF THE LAND

(continued from page 58)

writings, the periodical literature, and dissertations. From these sources Dick concentrates on "the human side of this process of land distribution."

Geographically, these sources emphasize the human experience in the American heartland from the topographic boundary of the Appalachians in the East to the climatic boundary of semiaridity which wavers around the 100th meridian in the west.

This emphasis on the "human side," alas, turns out to be emphasis on human rapacity, at least as measured in the documentary residue of this human process of acquiring land from a national patrimony. Dick acknowledges a certain unmeasurable distortion inherent in the human and official tendency to record the criminal and irregular to the exclusion of the legal and the regular.

Dick's account gives ample, if not complete, illustration of the frontiersmen's political influence and skill at securing statutory confirmation of illegal and extralegal occupation of public and extra or illegal use of resources. He has three chapters on the rise of conservation, an accurate account of the gradual phasing out of the settlement policy and public management.

It would have been an excellent additional illustration of one of his major points—the ability of the land hungry to get statutory standing for their extralegal practices. Treatment of the farwestern land transfer process is largely from the secondary accounts.

Dick's closing statement that "when public land was gone the frontier outlook vanished with it" is premature. It does not take into account the long transition of public acceptance, now approaching an end, of the availability of public land within a system of public management.

There is something of a backhand compliment to previous authors in that for all the wealth of detail which Dick portrays, he did not find it necessary to offer new interpretations.

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BOOKS IN BRIEF

By Jane M. Offers

Stephen Crane in the West and Mexico edited by Joseph Katz *(Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio, 1971; 109 pp., intro., $6.75).*

These seventeen newspaper articles form a sequel to *The Red Badge of Courage*, famous novel of a Civil War soldier. The articles describe drought-stricken farmers in Nebraska, the New Orleans Mardi Gras, life in Texas, and the people and customs of Mexico City. Written in 1895, they are now being published for the first time in book form.

Trails of a Wilderness Wanderer by Andy Russell *(Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1970; 298 pp., intro., illus., $6.95).*

The author has recorded his experiences as a contemporary frontiersman in the mountainous wilds of Alberta, Canada. His view is of interest, since his previous book was hailed as a major contribution to the study of the grizzly bear. Here, he provides private adventure by unveiling his life as cowboy, broncbuster, trapper, rancher, and wildlife photographer.

George de Forest Brush: Recollections of a Joyous Painter by Nancy Douglas Bowditch *(Noone House, Peterborough, N.H., 1970; 257 pp., intro., illus., biblio., index, $8.50).*

The aptly named painter is brought to light in this chronicle by the eldest of his six daughters. He lived among the Indians and painted them extensively, but he is celebrated for his portraits of white people in classical poses.

Sam Houston's Wife: A Biography of Margaret Lea Houston by William Seale *(University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1970; 287 pp., index, illus., selected biblio., $6.95).*

The woman who had the greatest influence on the Liberator of Texas was his third wife, twenty-six years his junior. The protected child of a Baptist minister, she is credited with reforming the sometime alcoholic frontier hero. Her story is told for the first time in this book based on previously unpublished manuscripts and documents.

The Role of the Land Grant by Olen E. Leonard *(Calvin Horn Publisher, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1970; 198 pp., intro., illus., biblio., appen., index, $6.50).*

This is a sociological study of the social organization of a Spanish-American village in northern New Mexico. The 1940 study anticipates present-day stormy uprisings over land-grant disputes by focusing on the problems of villagers who lost their common grazing land. Villagers lost such land when the U.S. Supreme Court allowed white settlers to file for homesteads on what it claimed as "public domain."

Western Mining by Otis E Young, Jr., and Robert Lenon *(University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1970; 342 pp., illus., map, biblio., appen., index, $8.95).*

How gold was won from the earth is told in this informal account of mining on the frontier from Spanish times to 1893. It depicts precious-metals prospecting, placering, lode mining, and milling to the time of the repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, when the mining frontier virtually closed.

Victorian Lady on the Texas Frontier: The Journal of Ann Raney Coleman edited by C. Richard King *(University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1971; 206 pp., intro., biblio., index, $4.95).*

The feminine angle on frontier life is presented here in a charming diary form. A lady who emigrated from England tells her experiences as horsewoman, seafarer, and all-around pioneer.

Western Wagon Wheels by Lambert Florin *(Superior Publishing Company, Seattle, 1970; 184 pp., illus., biblio., index, $12.95).*

The West was won by people but they couldn't have done it without wheels. Wagon wheels, coach wheels, water wheels, even baby carriage wheels were necessary. The importance of the round device is expressed in this pictorial featuring 125 black and white photographs and ten drawings. It is a fitting tribute to mankind's greatest invention.

XUM

JOHN F. STEVENS—PATHFINDER OF THE WEST

(Continued from page 33)

Canyon, but to climb over the pass called for a grade of 4 percent. Work began a few years later on building the tunnel that Stevens had visualized, but for the intervening seven years, his switchbacks called for some of the most epic railroading in the nation.

At Skykomish, a division point in the valley west of the summit, a train of about twenty-five cars would cut down to five or six, with one sturdy little locomotive ahead, and another behind. Snorting up the mountain at five or six miles per hour, the little train headed into the first switchback, but when it come out of the Y the "rear" engine took over the lead, tugging the train up the hill while the "lead" engine pushed. The process was reversed as the train gained the next switchback, and kept on repeating until the fifth and last switchback was attained at the summit. There then remained three more switchbacks to get back down the eastern slope.

In summer, this would take anywhere from five to twenty hours. Winter was another story, with snowfalls of a foot an hour, piling up to thirty feet or more on the level, and drifts to twice that height. Hundreds of men were employed to keep the switchbacks open and shovel out the trains. It was mountain railroading at its best—or worst.

THE FIRST CASCADE TUNNEL, opened as the year 1900 drew to a close, was hailed as the engineering marvel of its day. For three years, from six hundred to eight hundred men hammered away at the granite deep below the pass. But when their work was completed, they had replaced nine miles of railroad, a rise of 700 feet, and 2,332 feet of curvature—the equivalent of seven complete circles.

No one was happier at completion of the tunnel than the hardy railroaders who had battled up and down the switchbacks. "Death Mountain," they called it, for runaway trains were frequent on the steep grades, and avalanches were a constant threat.

But long after the tunnel went into operation, the worst avalanche disaster in American history occurred just below Stevens Pass. The winter of 1910 was a memorable one in the Cascades. Snow fell relentlessly, reducing railroad service to a shambles. In the last week of February, two passenger trains were stalled at Wellington, a railroad town just west of the Cascade Tunnel. Snow blocked the line over the mountain at both ends, as railroad crews labored desperately to break through with their huge rotary plows.

One of the stalled trains was perched on the edge of a gulch behind the Wellington station, during the night of March 1, 1910. From a thousand feet up on the mountain, a great wall of snow suddenly broke loose. Thundering down the sheer slope, the avalanche swept the entire train into the canyon, carrying 101 people to their death, along with several railroad buildings. That event still ranks as the West's worst railroad tragedy.

The Wellington Disaster was a traumatic experience for Jim Hill's railroad. Even the name of the little railroad town was expunged from the records, rechristened as Tye. And plans began for an even longer and lower tunnel, to get away once and for all from those terrible avalanches. That tunnel was finally opened on January 12, 1929, and it is still the longest in the Western Hemisphere—eight miles. The Great Northern Railway had at last triumphed over the Cascades.

Though Jim Hill was no longer around to see it, John Stevens was. After completing the crossing of the Cascades, he rose steadily in the Great Northern hierarchy, becoming the railroad's chief engineer and later general manager, during the great era of railroad building at the turn of the century. He directed the construction of almost one thousand miles of new line, as the railroad filled out and expanded, and at times was simultaneously directing as many as two dozen major projects. Eventually he left the Great Northern and, in 1905, was summoned to Washington by President Theodore Roosevelt and placed in charge of Panama Canal planning and construction as its chief engineer, a position he held for the next two years.

But his service for Jim Hill was not yet ended. In 1908, a mysterious sportsman identifying himself as John F. Sampson loaded himself with trout-fishing gear and reconnoitered the Deschutes River in Oregon. It was not just coincidence that Hill was contesting with Edward H. Harriman of the Union Pacific for a route down this river to connect the Pacific Northwest with California.

The mysterious Mr. Sampson arranged to meet one William Nelson at a city park in Portland one rainy night and hand over to that gentleman $150,000 in cash for his controlling interest in a paper railroad that owned a right of way in the Deschutes Canyon. Mr. Sampson, it turned out, was John F. Stevens, now president of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railroad, a subsidiary of Hill's Great Northern.

When the Kerensky regime surfaced in Russia after the czar was toppled, and President Woodrow Wilson decided to send over a top engineer to keep the Russian railways operating, he called on John Stevens. Stevens headed the American Railway Mission to Russia until 1922, when Allied troops were withdrawn after the Soviets gained power.

Stevens returned to America, and to such tributes as that of Major General George W. Goethals, his successor at the Panama Canal, who labeled Stevens "one of the greatest engineers that ever lived." In 1925 he received the John Fritz gold medal for "notable scientific and industrial achievement," and in 1939 the gold medal of the Franklin Institute and the Hoover medal of the American Society of Civil Engineers. Although he had never received an engineering degree, he was elected an honorary member of this professional society in 1922, and became its president five years later. France made him an officer of the Legion of Honor, his own country bestowed the Distinguished Service Medal upon him, and similar honors came from Czechoslovakia, Japan, and China.

Stevens died in Southern Pines, North Carolina, June 2, 1943, at the age of ninety. By then, the pass that he had traced in the wilderness was busy transporting troops and supplies for World War II over a mighty railroad, while high above it, a state highway carried ever increasing traffic over the summit on

which his name had been emblazoned on a cedar tree.

In 1925, long after the first Cascade Tunnel was built and the switchback route abandoned, the old zigzag right of way was converted to the first auto road over the pass, providing a challenging journey up and around the tight hairpin curves of the onetime switchbacks. Unlike the railroad, the highway department made no attempt to keep the pass open in winter—but the steep, narrow road was adventurous enough for a Model T even on a dry summer day.

Eventually this old road was replaced by a new state highway, which, like the railroad, was built up the opposite side of the valley from Stevens's original line. A few years ago, the state temporarily closed this highway while rebuilding it to four lanes and, at a cost of more than a million dollars, rebuilt the abandoned old road over the switchbacks as a temporary bypass.

The old tunnel, abandoned since 1929, now is serving modern science in a way that Stevens could never have imagined. Its granite insulation and straight bore make it an ideal laboratory for scientists who measure movements in the earth's crust by a laser beam that peers unblinkingly the length of the tunnel.

From the new highway, travelers can see across the valley the great concrete snowsheds that were built after the Wellington avalanche brought its toll of death and destruction, and several levels of the old line are still plainly visible.

Stevens Pass is today one of the Northwest's most popular recreation areas. Every winter thousands of skiers flock to the pass to revel in the snow that made railroading a nightmare seventy-five years ago. In summer fishermen and hikers pour over the Cascade Crest Trail, tramping the original grade of the Great Northern Railway as surveyed by John F. Stevens.

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Earl Clark, *a freelance writer from Port Angeles, Washington, has long been interested in the Stevens Pass area as a hiker, skier, and railroad buff.*

TREES OF THE TOTEM CULTURE

(Continued from page 21)

after the Indians had seen European ships. There were many smaller models, for river and inshore use, for small crews and for lone sailors; and canoe patterns varied from tribe to tribe, region to region. In its time the Northwest Coast canoe was one of the finest vessels ever made by primitive man. The Haida war canoe and Nootka whaler, fifty- and sixty-footers carrying forty men with supplies and gear, were perhaps rivaled only by the great double-hulled ocean craft of the Polynesians.

The Indians' dwellings, commonly occupied by several related families, also varied in style, size, and construction from one area and tribe to another. Northern houses were between forty and sixty feet wide, almost square, and gable-roofed. In the south, longer and narrower homes with shed roofs were the rule (one building five hundred feet long and sixty feet wide has been recorded). Frames were massive, with upright posts often more than two feet square, and long, heavy horizontal beams, broad rafters, and wide, thick plank siding. The entrance might be a round hole cut through a huge central door post, carved and painted, and facing the sea. There would be a back doorway and a smoke hole in the middle of the roof. Interiors were cubicled for the separate families, with the chief's apartment at the rear. In splitting planks and timber, the builders drove yew wedges in series along the desired lines: red cedar is notable for cleavage in even planes. Bark was saved and shredded for fiber—these people were good husbanders of their resources.

No single object has been more familiarly associated with Northwest Coast culture than the totem pole. Anywhere from ten to seventy feet tall, carved in animal figures and brightly painted, standing in rows before the village houses —certainly these cedarwood objects were the most conspicuous (if also the grossest) art form these Indians created. From some ancient time down to the present they have stood—gray-weathered, or reconstructed, or recopied modern—often the first visible sign of human occupancy at shoreside forest clearings.

Voyagers approaching Vancouver Island's west coast and the Queen Charlottes saw them well before landing. As natives of treeless Easter Island raised up their megalith monuments hewn from the only material at hand, so the Northwest Coast people carved their memorials out of logs, sometimes three feet in diameter, and stood them erect as if to proclaim: "In this land all things are of the tree."

The Indian canoes are mostly gone now, and the old totem poles have moldered and fallen like ancient trees in the forest. Few houses still stand which were raised and joined in the old way, with wedge-split and adze-finished timbers and broad planking. Indians who remain on the Northwest Coast, no doubt with lessening reflection on the past, have mostly taken up the habits of the times. A potlatch dimly shadows past affluence and social glories and burdens, if it does so at all.

It is perhaps worth something to think of these people as they were, in their own long and high time on this coast, however they came and in how distant a past. They came, probably from less hospitable regions, and they made the ocean's edge and the forest their own—the abundant shore and the vast forest of spruce and hemlock and cedar. They mastered the deep sea with hewn logs. And they made a good living and a good life along this edge where the greatest forest and the greatest ocean meet. This is not a bad record for any people.

Don Greame Kelley, *naturalist, cartographer, and illustrator of numerous books on the environment, is an associate editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

XUM

ANGLE OF REPOSE

(continued from page 49)

sky that all down the pass had been a dark, serene blue. They passed a string of corrals, then a repair yard where the bodily parts of a hundred wagons were strewn. People appeared and thickened —walkers, riders, drivers of buggies and wagons. . . . The shacks grew thicker, the road became the parody of a street. . . ." No one has ever described the essence of a mining town with fewer words or more exactness.

The details of time and place, presented through the experience (and sometimes the words) of Susan Ward, provide one important element of understanding. Another is found in the person of Oliver Ward, a man committed to pursuing dreams. He is a mining engineer, but like many of his breed his hopes transcend the bare schemas of his trade. The emerging technology which he represents can, he believes, come to a noble fruition in the malleable West, a land that can be shaped to fit visions.

His passionate wandering, dragging his wife and family behind him like a tail, is a kind of pilgrimage, one that ends, like so many others, in frustration —his with the failure of a grandiose irrigation project on the Snake River plains, done in by the manipulations of eastern finance and by his own overblown hopes. Failure or no, in the character of Oliver Ward lie distilled and incandescent the qualities that built a civilization in the western wilderness.

If Stegner had given us no more than the story of this couple's groping journey toward a comprehension of themselves and the land they came to take from the wind, *Angle of Repose* would have been a major achievement, an invaluable contribution to an understanding of what our western past meant to those who lived it. But in the person of the narrator, Lyman Ward, the book is raised to an even higher level of realization. He is a fascinating creation, filled with the juices of prejudice, insight, contention, wisdom, and weakness, a muted chorus trapped in a wheelchair, criticizing, explaining, complaining, elaborating, and illuminating as the story dictates and his private despair leads him.

In his presence, we are never allowed to forget the sense of time, or that the present does not exist without the past and the future—that to see ourselves for what we are and what we may become, we must examine the structure and meaning of what we have been. For the purposes of art, Lyman Ward represents the difference between story-telling and literature; for the purposes of history, he represents the difference between fact and understanding.

"I await the day," Stegner wrote some years ago in an essay for *The American West Review,* "when I can review a novel that does for the West what *The Confessions of Nat Turner* does for Virginia and the South. . . ." We can be grateful that he decided not to wait for another man's work; he did it himself.

T. H. Watkins *is an associate editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

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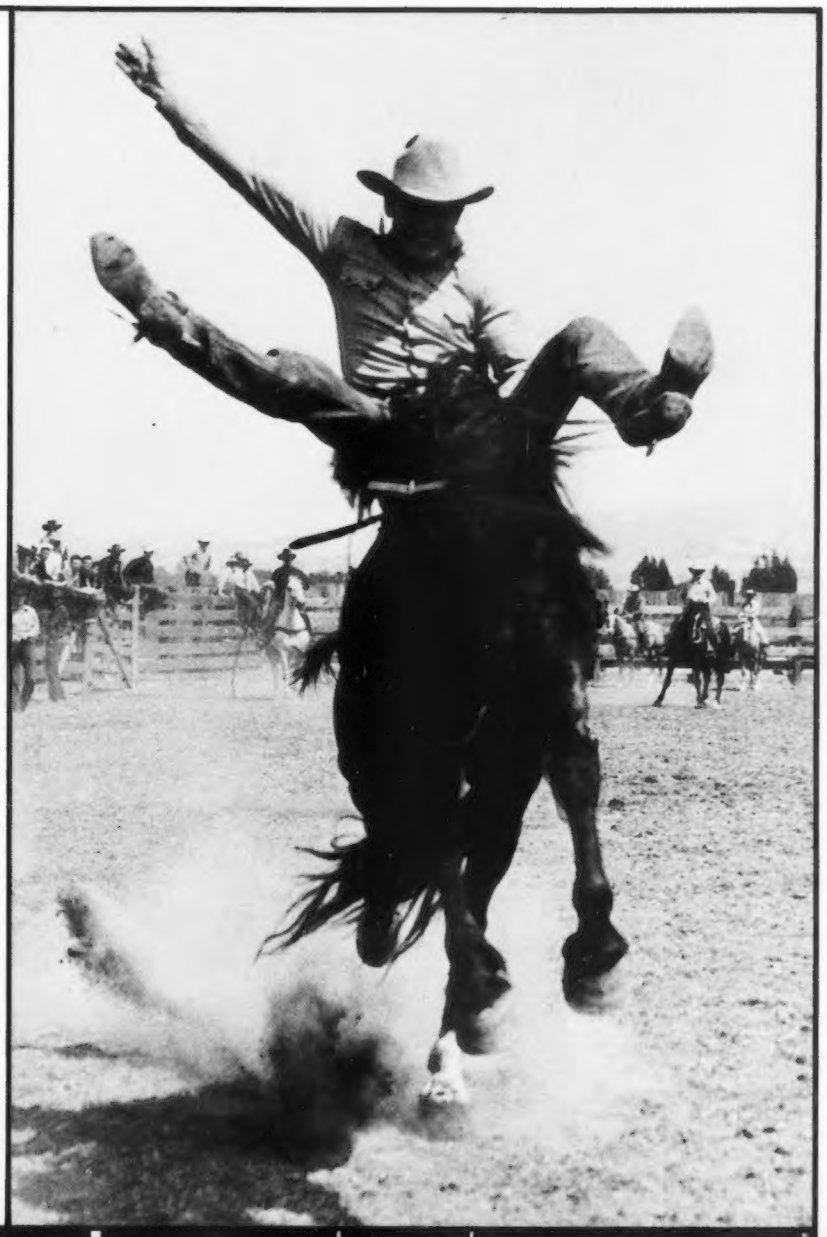

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